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*The Balkans and the Byzantine World before and after the Captures of Constantinople, 1204 and 1453*, edited by Vlada Stanković.

**The Balkans and  
Byzantine World before  
and after the Captures  
of Constantinople,  
1204 and 1453**

Edited by Vlada Stanković

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*Dedicated to the memory of  
Ivan Djurić (1947–1997)  
and  
Srdjan Rajković (1970–2006),  
victims of the Balkans*



"The results of the fourth crusade have likewise been assessed negatively. 'In the wide sweep of world history,' again according to Runciman, 'the effects were wholly disastrous' (S. Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, vol. III [Cambridge, 1954], p. 130). It paved the way for the fall of Constantinople in 1453 and the Islamization and Balkanization of eastern Europe. . . ."

—G. Constable, *Crusaders and Crusading in the Twelfth Century* (Farnham–Burlington, 2008), p. 323.

## Contents

Acknowledgments	ix
Introduction: In the Balkans "without" Constantinople: Questions of Center and Periphery <i>Vlada Stanković</i>	xi
<b>PART I: IN A WORLD WITHOUT A CENTER: REMAINING BYZANTINE</b>	<b>1</b>
1 Byzantium's Retreating Balkan Frontiers during the Reign of the Angeloi (1185–1203): A Reconsideration <i>Alicia Simpson</i>	3
2 Discontinuity and Continuity of Byzantine Literary Tradition After the Crusaders' Capture of Constantinople: The Case of "Original" Byzantine Romances <i>Dušan Popović</i>	23
3 The Divided Empire: Byzantium on the Eve of 1204 <i>Radivoj Radić</i>	31
4 The Fate of the Palaiologan Aristocracy of Thessalonike after 1423 <i>Nicholas Melvani</i>	41
5 Donor Portraits in the State of Epirus: Aesthetics, Fashion, and Trends in the Late Byzantine Period <i>Katerina Kontopanagou</i>	59
6 Monastic Foundation Legends in Epirus <i>Christos Stavrakos</i>	69

## PART II: THE PERIPHERIES: IN THE SHADOW OF CONSTANTINOPLE AND ITS INFLUENCE

- |    |   |     |
|----|---|-----|
| 7  | Studenica and the Life Giving Tree<br><i>Jelena Erdeljan</i>  | 79  |
| 8  | Rethinking the Position of Serbia within Byzantine<br><i>Oikoumene</i> in the Thirteenth Century<br><i>Vlada Stanković</i>          | 81  |
| 9  | The Synodicon of Orthodoxy in BAR Ms. S1. 307 and the<br><i>Hagioriticon Gramma</i> of the Year 1344<br><i>Ivan Biliarsky</i>       | 91  |
| 10 | Mount Athos and the Byzantine-Slavic Tradition in<br>Wallachia and Moldavia after the Fall of Constantinople<br><i>Radu G. Păun</i> | 103 |
| 11 | The Center of the Periphery: The Land of Bosnia in<br>the Heart of Bosnia<br><i>Jelena Mrgić</i>                                    | 117 |

## PART III: AFTERMATH: BETWEEN TWO EMPIRES, BETWEEN TWO ERAS

- |    |   |     |
|----|---|-----|
| 12 | Before and After the Fall of the Serbian Despotate: The<br>Differences in the Timar Organization in the Serbian Lands<br>in the Mid-Fifteenth Century<br><i>Ema Miljković</i> | 165 |
| 13 | Memories of Home in the Accounts of the Balkan Refugees<br>from the Ottomans to the Apennine Peninsula (Fifteenth to<br>Sixteenth Centuries)<br><i>Nada Zečević</i>           | 183 |

Index

About the Contributors

## Acknowledgments

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## Introduction

### *In the Balkans "without" Constantinople: Questions of Center and Periphery*

Vlada Stanković

Southeastern Europe in the Middle Ages—and until a very recent past—was a strongly monocentric region. Constantinople, and later Istanbul, stood at the very center of all the major political, ideological, cultural, legal, and religious developments of this part of Europe, although being geographically located on the continent's very limit. It was an uneven world, tilted strongly toward the most southeastern tip of the landmass by the overwhelming gravitational force of the capital city—for centuries, the only real capital in Europe after the fall of Old Rome. "The Greatest Christian City of the Middle Ages," in the words of Paul Magdalino, equated with Byzantium itself,<sup>1</sup> Constantinople was at the same time central and essential for southeastern Europe, strongly influencing the development of the entire region. But it is certainly worth asking how the periphery functioned once the dominant center was taken out of the equation.

The strong centrality of the medieval Balkans was additionally highlighted by a double marginalization of the world outside of the strictly speaking borders of the empire—regardless of how we tend to define and understand them—that became peripheral in culture, in almost a civilizational sense, as it was geopolitical, especially in the reflections of Byzantine authors through the centuries. Emphasized political centralism of the Byzantine state and the strong rule of the central "government" were numbered among the most positive features of the empire in the seminal works on Byzantine history in the early days of the field of Byzantine studies in pre-World War II Europe, and remained as such long after the war, especially in the eastern part of the now politically and ideologically divided Europe.<sup>2</sup> With the center and its assumed positive, constructive, and also civilizing powers held in such a high esteem in scholarship, *anticentrism*, defined as the centrifugal tendencies of peripheral regions, became one of the most negative factors in

Byzantine history, that, hand-in-hand with feudalization—another form of *anticentrism*—brought about the destruction of the empire.<sup>3</sup> As a counter balance, the national historiographies in southeastern Europe attempted to create new central points within more limited borders, demonstratively rejecting the notion of the peripheral status of the nation in question with respect to the Constantinople–Byzantium–Greek speaking world.<sup>4</sup> Paradoxically, the result was mainly the mythologization of the center–periphery paradigm.<sup>5</sup>

Strengthened in that way from national and “anational” (i.e., Byzantine) scholarships alike, the paradigm survived the challenge of a commonwealth model devised by Dimitri Obolensky. Acknowledging the significance of Constantinople as the center of the presumed commonwealth of people who were geopolitically within the Byzantine sphere of influence, but stressing at the same time the variety of the forms of co-existence within a world unified by culture and religion, Obolensky’s model remained mostly a point of reference in scholarship with a few attempts to further explore its possibilities.<sup>6</sup> Many useful sides of Obolensky’s proposal were not followed up in subsequent generations despite the diffusion of its main tenets through various publication and edited volumes of Obolensky’s pupil Jonathan Shepard.<sup>7</sup> The evident flaws of the Byzantine commonwealth as proposed by Obolensky, on the other hand, such as chronological unevenness and overreaching geopolitical aspirations—to which the author himself alluded in the Introduction to his book—were taken as proof of the artificiality of the entire model. Regardless of whether one opts to discard the term commonwealth in relation to Byzantium, or to use it stressing both its usefulness and adaptability, as Garth Fowden did introducing “the first Byzantine commonwealth” as a concept suited for understanding the First Millennium in the Eastern Mediterranean,<sup>8</sup> it is necessary to look beyond the notions of centrifugal and centripetal tendencies, beyond the simplified, black-and-white picture that presumes incapability of smaller peripheral regions to exist, function, thrive, and decline, or even die out without a dominant force and an influence of a center.

That that was not the case is evidenced in the responsiveness and high adaptability of the entire region of southeastern Europe to the destruction of the Byzantine Empire and the conquest of the Empire’s capital in the Fourth Crusade. In a world without Constantinople the “periphery” did not simply reach to another “center,” even less tried automatically to form one. The complexity of the relations that bonded Constantinople and the peripheral regions were matched by the complexity of interregional, periphery-to-periphery relations that became all the more evident once the shadow of Constantinople ceased to hover over southeastern Europe. The fate of the Balkans was then one of a constant periphery,<sup>9</sup> but with the captures of Constantinople in 1204 and 1453 the Byzantine world found itself in a similar position: Stripped of an orienteering center point, the peripheries fought for dominance one over

the other, unveiling the intensity of interactions on the regional level that was hidden beneath the all-present communication with and influence of the mighty capital.

Understanding and explaining the strongly centralized, pre-modern state, with even more center-oriented sources is a significant task for which, doubtlessly, new research models should be devised that would go far beyond traditional, mutually unconnected overviews of different provincial areas. As far as southeastern Europe is concerned, there has been little progress since John Fine’s solid if outdated overviews of the medieval Balkans that represented only in name a regional approach since Fine actually followed quite strictly usually modern national boundaries or the lines of modern national historiographies.<sup>10</sup> While the results of Paul Stephenson’s *Byzantium’s Balkan Frontier* are very significant, he remains faithful to the concept of separated narratives, barely looking for interconnections on a level lower than that of the official Byzantine politics and sources. It is also misleading to present a history of the entire southeastern Europe as the one of a frontier or even frontier or border zones, as the Balkan hinterland was never viewed by the Byzantines as a real frontier. Florin Curta presents a more interconnected narrative in his *Southeastern Europe in the Middle Ages*, importantly drawing attention to the concept of southeastern Europe and its significance.<sup>11</sup>

In other words, the response to overwhelming, strongly one-sided and unproductive center–periphery discourse should not be its minor transformation to conform to the creation of another, scaled-down centers and peripheries that orbit around them, but rather the embracement of a *regional approach* that can provide at least some of the answers to the questions of the functioning of Byzantium in the Balkans and the relations between the politics in southeastern Europe in the Middle Ages.<sup>12</sup> Regionalism could offer a new perspective in studying geographically fluctuant entities—as were most of medieval politics in the Balkans—and could prove even more useful for better understanding Byzantium and its transformation in the aftermath of the capture of Constantinople in 1204. Patrick Geary demonstrated how forms of regionalism emerged in the third century, the most problematic of all the centuries of late Roman Empire, and how it contributed to the transformation of the Roman world.<sup>13</sup> And regionalism, albeit of a different form and in the absence of a single dominating empire, helped immensely to understand and explain the “Europeization of Europe,” as Robert Bartlett pointed out.<sup>14</sup> As a concept it may also be helpful in mapping the *Balkanization* of the Byzantine world. To propose exactly that perspective was the main idea behind the present volume.<sup>15</sup> It aspires not only to add more pieces to a still quite vacant puzzle or to necessarily clarify the meaning of some of its parts, but to add more color and another dimension to the picture in its entirety that will help us understand its complexity and diversity.

The volume *The Balkans and the Byzantine World before and after the Captures of Constantinople, 1204 and 1453* came into existence having in mind that concept. Similar to the project *Christian Culture in the Balkans in the Middle Ages: Byzantine Empire, the Serbs, and the Bulgarians, 9th–15th Century* that served as its starting point, it does not pretend to offer definite answers but rather seeks to promote new perspectives, crossing both modern national borders and strict, traditional but unwarranted chronological divisions. It is self-evident that a volume such as this cannot and should not present a coherent, monothematic narrative—the reader is encouraged to explore separate topics in an order that he or she prefers, in the hope that the vastness of the problems that wait to be satisfactorily studied or adequately revisited will become clearer as will the enormity of the work that lies ahead. If it represents a beginning of that inspiring and exciting process of rethinking and redefining the history of southeastern Europe in the Middle Ages and beyond, this volume will have fulfilled its mission.

## NOTES

1. P. Magdalino, "Byzantium = Constantinople," in Liz James (ed.), *A Companion to Byzantium* (Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World), (Chichester, 2010), 43–54.

2. G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, translated by Joan Hussey (Oxford, 1956), set the standards in Byzantine studies for decades in this as in many other aspects. The American edition of Ostrogorsky's *History*, with many more illustrations, was published by Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, New Jersey in 1957, with the second edition in 1969. The path that contemporary Byzantine studies are taking sadly seems to lead to further self-isolation of this field from broader medieval studies, in spite of the recent attempts to introduce new approaches and research perspectives that relate to a "revolution" in the scholarship of the western Middle Ages, to use Peter Brown's judgment (*The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity AD 200–1000* [Malden–Oxford, 1996], p. ix; second edition from 2003, that was "substantially revised and rewritten" to take into account "the veritable 'dam burst' in the study of late antiquity and early Middle Ages which has taken place within the last five years," testifies for an amazing advancement of the scholarship in these fields [Malden–Oxford, 2003, p. 1]): In the first place, Averil Cameron's *The Byzantines* (Malden–Oxford, 2006) and *Byzantine Matters* (Princeton, 2014)—but see a review by A. Kaldellis, *Journal of Late Antiquity*, Number 2, Fall 2014, pp. 376–78—and Judith Herrin's *Byzantium: The Surprising Life of a Medieval Empire* (Princeton, 2007) with A. Kaldellis's *The Byzantine Republic: People and Power in New Rome* (Cambridge, Mass., 2015) by far most innovative in approach and ideas. These new tendencies found a strange response in Karl Kaser's *The Balkans and the Near East: Introduction to a Shared History, Studies on South East Europe*, edited by Prof. Dr. Karl Kaser (Graz), vol. 12 (Munster, 2011), a revolutionary attempt in

the wrong direction that brings the "orientalizing" view in the historical discourse of the Balkans—despite the author's claim to the contrary—by creating an artificial geopolitical unity stretching from the Danube to the Tigris which he names "Eurasia Minor." In general though, Byzantine studies still remain deeply rooted in the early twentieth-century methodology and organized on the same, long-since obsolete principles of subtopics in scholarly matters, and national units in organizational matters, that hinder the efforts to study and present more adequately the longest-lasting European Empire. The phrase "balkanized Byzantinists," in spite of its unintended slightly neo-colonial edge, actually describes quite accurately the major reason why Byzantine studies are lagging so far behind the studies of the western Middle Ages (Christopher Kelly, "Rome in Riddles," *Times Literary Supplement*, Sep. 4, 2014, pp. 3–4, and response of Mark Whittow in *TLS*, Sep. 19, *Letters to the Editor* that actually does not address the problem raised by Kelly). The state of the field is also reflected in the lack of the contemporary reevaluation of the seminal scholarly works of the field such as Ostrogorsky's *History*; see for instance, D. M. Gwynn (ed.), *A. H. M. Jones and the Later Roman Empire* (Leiden–Boston, 2008). All the above points to the fact that Byzantine historians are still talking mainly to themselves, failing not only to create new paradigms but also to attract Western medievalists' and other non-Byzantine scholars' interest and to engage them in a productive dialogue.

3. A. Kazhdan, "Centrostreamitel'nye i centrobezhrnye sily v vizantijskom mire (1081–1261 gg.)" (*Centripetal and Centrifugal Forces in Byzantine World, 1081–1261*), *XV Congress international des études byzantines, Rapports, I-1* (Athens, 1976), pp. 13–28; translated in Greek as "The Structure of Byzantine Society" (Η δομή της βυζαντινής κοινωνίας), *Byzantiaka* 31 (1983), pp. 91–107. See G. W. Bowersock, "Centrifugal Force in Late Antique Historiography," *The Past Before Us* (2004), pp. 19–23. I thank Andrea Sterk for this reference.

4. Earlier Greek scholarship, for obvious reasons, represented an exception in this regard, although the question of identity in Byzantium, the (re)birth of the ideas of Hellenic identity and nationality, and the overwhelming above-national Roman identity are closely connected—now as they were centuries ago—with the notion of Constantinople as the ultimate center of the Greek and Orthodox world, and the capital's relations with the provinces. See the most recent discussion on identity in the Byzantine Empire, A. Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium: The Transformation of Greek Identity and the Reception of Classical Tradition* (Cambridge, 2007); G. Page, *Being Byzantine: Greek Identity before the Ottomans* (Cambridge, 2008); A. Kaldellis, "From Rome to New Rome, from Empire to Nation State: Reopening the Question of Byzantium's Roman Identity," in L. Grig and G. Kelly (eds.), *Two Romes: Rome and Constantinople in Late Antiquity*. (New York–Oxford, 2012), pp. 387–404; A. Sotiriadis, "Roman Identity in Byzantium: A Critical Approach," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 107–1 (2014), pp. 175–220.

5. The discussion about the relation of the center and the periphery and the functioning of the peripheries and their diverse categorization is almost non-existent in Byzantine studies, and the entire concept of periphery is usually limited to local centers in the regions of the modern state of Greece; see L. Neville, *Authority in Byzantine Provincial Society, 950–1100* (Cambridge, 2004); J. Herrin, *Margins and*



*Metropolis: Authority across the Byzantine Empire* (Princeton, 2013). Catherine Holmes lays out very clearly all of the problems pertaining to the study of the provinces of the Byzantine world in "Provinces and Capital," in Liz James (ed.), *A Companion to Byzantium*, pp. 55–66. Admittedly, the sources relative to the periphery are scarce (M. Whitton, *The Making of Orthodox Byzantium, 600–1025* (Basingstoke–New York, 1996), pp. 1–14) but that fact should not be an excuse not to approach these subject matters from a different perspective, like Robert Bartlett did in his *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change 950–1550* (Princeton, 1993), or more recently, Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom*, 2nd edition, pp. 12–17, and chapters 1–2, 14–16, and Garth Fowden, *Before and After Muhammad: The First Millennium Refocused* (Princeton, 2014). The questions of power—the nominal center—and the broadly defined peripheral world, often cut down to a single individual, are explored in a series of case studies in K. J. Jansen, G. Geltner, and A. E. Lester (eds.), *Center and Periphery: Studies in Power in the Medieval World in Honor of William Chester Jordan* (Leiden, 2013). See M. Rowlands, M. Larsen, and K. Kristiansen (eds.), *Centre and Periphery in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, 1987) for concepts of center and periphery in ancient world, and especially in respect to economic systems, M. Rowlands, "Centre and periphery: A review of a concept," pp. 1–11.

6. D. Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth: Eastern Europe, 500–1453* (Oxford, 1971). Christian Raffensperger, "Revisiting Idea of the Byzantine Commonwealth," *Byzantinische Forschungen* 28 (2004), pp. 159–74, and idem, *Reimagining Europe: Kievan Rus' in the Medieval World* (Cambridge, Mass.–London, 2012), chapter 1, recently reexamined Obolensky's idea, focusing mainly on the Rus'. Among the scholars in southeastern Europe, Obolensky's *Byzantine Commonwealth* most often finds only mention in the titles of the works, usually with the intention of emphasizing someone's expertise in broader, above-national history, mainly Byzantine, but without any attempt at defining the concept more clearly.

7. See, for instance, Jonathan Shepard, "The Byzantine Commonwealth, 1000–1550," in *Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. V, ed. M. Angold (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 3–52.

8. Garth Fowden, *Empire to Commonwealth: Consequences of Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Princeton, 1993). A different perspective is found in Chris Wickham, *The Inheritance of Rome: A History of Europe from 400 to 1000*, The Penguin History of Europe (New York, 2009).

9. Or at least of a semi-periphery, to borrow a term from contemporary social science, Nikos P. Mouzelis, *Politics in the Semi-Periphery: Early Parliamentary and Late Industrialization in the Balkans and Latin America* (New York, 1986).

10. J. V. A. Fine Jr., *The Early Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey From the Sixth to the Late Twelfth Century* (Ann Arbor, 1983); idem, *The Late Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the Late Twelfth Century to the Ottoman Conquest* (Ann Arbor, 1987). S. Čurčić, *Architecture in the Balkans: From Diocletian to Süleyman the Magnificent* (New Haven–London, 2010) also suffers from the adherence to the outdated historiographical narrative built around the strict divisions between medieval politics in southeastern Europe and equally strict chronological periodization that for

the actual historical context in which the events took place and for which the buildings were built.

11. P. Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier: A Political Study of the Northern Balkans, 900–1204* (Cambridge, 2000) and idem, "Balkan Borderlands (1018–1204)" in *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire, c. 500–1492*, ed. J. Shepard (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 664–90; F. Curta, *Southeastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 500–1250* (Cambridge, 2006). For the Byzantine concepts of frontier and the Balkans see V. Stanković, "Karakter vizantijske granice na Balkanu," *Papers of the Third Yugoslav Byzantine Studies Conference* (Belgrade–Kruševac, 2002), pp. 277–96 (in Serbian with French summary), reprinted in idem, *Putovanja kroz Vizantiju (Journeys through Byzantium)* (Belgrade, 2014), I. Rare occurrences when the notion of a frontier in relation to the Empire's Balkan hinterland is found in literary sources (e.g., in the *Alexiad* of Anna Komnene, eds. D. R. Reinsch and A. Kambylis (Berlin–New York, 2001), IX.4.2–3, p. 266) point more to the existence of imaginary/literary and very traversable "frontiers" (in plural) than to a single line that divided the Byzantines from the "others" in the Balkans. See P. Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom*, pp. 110–17; D. Abulafia and N. Berend (eds.), *Medieval Frontiers: Concepts and Practices* (Aldershot–Burlington, 2002), and especially R. Ellenblum, "Were there Borders and Borderlines in the Middle Ages? The Example of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem," pp. 105–19, and F. Curta (ed.), *Borders, Barriers and Ethnogenesis: Frontiers in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 2005).

12. See Catherine Holmes, "Provinces and Capital," and J. Harris, C. Holmes, and E. Russell (eds.), *Byzantines, Latins, and Turks in the Eastern Mediterranean World after 1150* (Oxford, 2012).

13. Patrick J. Geary, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton, 2002), pp. 64–73, 90–1, 136–41, 152. The importance of a regional perspective has actually been reaffirmed in the wake of Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell's promotional book *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (Oxford–Malden, 2000), see W. V. Harris (ed.), *Rethinking the Mediterranean* (New York, 2005). See also, John Haldon and Hugh Kennedy, "Regional Identities and Military Power: Byzantium and Islam ca. 600–750," in W. Pohl, C. Gantner, and R. Payne (eds.), *Visions of Community in the Post-Roman World: The West, Byzantium and the Islamic World, 300–1100* (Farnham–Burlington, 2012), pp. 317–53.

14. Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe*, ch. 11.

15. By "Balkanization" I do not simply understand the process of the seemingly endless creation of new, insufficiently defined and loosely structured and organized polities—although all that occurred on a regional level once the grasp of Constantinople ceased to exist—but also the process of more apparent acceptance and use of Byzantine political, ideological, cultural, and religious tropes in the Balkans. This process, whose side effect was the creation of a narrower, emphatically more Balkan character of the Byzantine Empire, commenced with a scarcely studied Byzantine reoccupation of its European hinterland from the 1020s onwards, which represented especially Byzantine "aristocratic diaspora"—to borrow another concept from Robert Bartlett (*The Making of Europe*, ch. 2)—whose consequences may not have been as encompassing as in the Latin world, but had doubtless significant impact on the character

of Byzantium's Balkans. For twentieth-century reverberations of the term, see Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea* (New York, 2012), pp. 262–73; A. Cameron, *The Byzantines*, pp. 1–13; idem, *Byzantine Matters*, pp. 1–6; Herrin, *Byzantium*, p. xiv, but also—interestingly—Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, *The Final Days* (New York, 1976), p. 254, conveying the deeply rooted perception of “Byzantium” as something essentially immoral in the context of the practices of the Nixon White House, p. 254: “When you get to the proof . . . you find yourself in the labyrinth of the White House, in the Byzantine Empire where ‘yes’ meant ‘no’ and ‘go’ was ‘stop’ and ‘maybe’ meant ‘certainly’ and it is confusing, perplexing and puzzling and difficult for any group of people to sort out. But that is just the very nature of the crime—that in executing the means, everything will be done to confuse and to fool, to misconstrue, so that the purpose of the decision is concealed.”

## Part I

# IN A WORLD WITHOUT A CENTER: REMAINING BYZANTINE

## Chapter 1

# Byzantium's Retreating Balkan Frontiers during the Reign of the Angeloi (1185–1203)

## *A Reconsideration*<sup>1</sup>

Alicia Simpson

In the course of the middle through the late twelfth century the Byzantine emperor Manuel I Komnenos (1143–80), utilizing a combination of force and diplomacy, managed to restore and consolidate imperial power in the Balkans. In the western Balkans, the emperor successfully competed with Hungary, Byzantium's main rival for influence in the region, and gained control of Dalmatia and the district of Sirmium, thus significantly extending the empire's frontiers in the region. Upon the death of the Hungarian King Stephen III in 1172, Manuel installed his protégé, Béla-Alexios, on the Hungarian throne. Béla III (1172–96) had married the emperor's sister-in-law, Agnes of Antioch, and received the rank of caesar; he was therefore a member of the Byzantine court hierarchy and subject to his superior, the emperor. Having sworn an oath to uphold the interests of the Byzantine emperor, he was installed as king of Hungary in the presence of an imperial delegation that had accompanied him from Constantinople. At the same time, Manuel forced the troublesome grand župan of Serbia, Stefan Nemanja (1166–96), into submission. Nemanja was compelled to seek forgiveness in an orchestrated ritual of public humiliation and, subsequently, to take part in an imperial triumph staged in Constantinople as the emperor's *doulos*.<sup>2</sup> To the east, the regions of Macedonia, Thrace, and the Paradounavon remained trouble-free after the victory of John II Komnenos (1118–43) over the Cuman invaders who had crossed the Danube and plundered Thrace in 1122. The sources mention a further Cuman raid early in the reign of Manuel (1148) which fell upon the cities located on the shores of the Danube, but none thereafter. In fact, the surviving evidence paints a picture of tranquility in the Balkan interior throughout the twelfth century.<sup>3</sup>

Yet shortly after the death of Manuel in 1180 Byzantine authority in the northern Balkans was seriously challenged by the resurgence of Hungary and the emergence of autonomous polities in Serbia and Bulgaria. By 1182 Béla III of Hungary had annexed Dalmatia and Sirmium. The usurpation of Andronikos I Komnenos (1183–5) sparked a raiding campaign in the region of Niš-Braničevo extending from Belgrade to Sofia. The Hungarians presumably withdrew from any territories they may have occupied in this region following the conclusion of an alliance with Isaac II Angelos (1185–95) but are said to have retained Dalmatia and Sirmium, which had formed Béla's patrimony.<sup>4</sup> Stefan Nemanja of Serbia, whose forces had participated along with the Hungarians in the raiding campaign of 1182–3, took the opportunity to expand his own domains in the following years. He first conquered Kosovo and Metohija; subsequently he occupied the city of Niš and its surrounding region; acquired Duklja (Zeta) and the string of territories along the southern Adriatic coastline, and penetrated into northern Macedonia, taking Skopje and the upper Vardar.<sup>5</sup> Finally, beginning in late 1185, the Vlach-Bulgarian insurrection wreaked havoc on the Byzantine lands adjacent to the Haimos Mountains (Stara Planina), Macedonia, and central Thrace, eventually leading to the establishment of the "Second Bulgarian Empire," which was formally recognized by Byzantium most probably in 1202.<sup>6</sup>

In order to explain this extraordinary reversal, modern scholars have often looked to the weakness of the central government, the internal power struggles, and the regional separatism, which characterize the period under consideration.<sup>7</sup> Inevitably, however, Byzantium's retreating Balkan frontiers and the rise of autonomous polities in the later twelfth century has been viewed, consciously or unconsciously, through the prism of the Latin capture of Constantinople in 1204. In this context, the fate of the Byzantine Balkans is taken to reflect a state of progressive internal disintegration that undermined imperial authority in the periphery, encouraged regional separatism, and invited foreign intervention. This may appear to be the case when we apply a holistic and long-term approach to the period in question, but can perhaps be challenged if we examine regional and short-term developments in isolation, and at the same time, refrain from viewing the capture of Constantinople as the culmination of a period of internal decline. In what follows, I will briefly re-examine the political developments in Byzantium's northern Balkan territories during the reigns of Isaac II and his successor Alexios III Angelos (1195–1203) in order to reconsider the collapse of the Byzantine position in this important region in the final decades of the twelfth century. Although there is now a wealth of scholarly literature on the northern Balkans in this period, it has not yet affected the standard perceptions and evaluations of the Angeloi, whose policies are viewed as mediocre at best and disastrous at worst.<sup>8</sup> At first glance, it is obvious that the political turmoil that

accompanied the death of Manuel Komnenos provided the pretext as well as the opportunity for various regional rulers in the northern Balkans to assert their independence and extend their authority at the expense of the empire. But we need to consider why this trend persisted after the accession of Isaac II to the throne in 1185. We also need to examine how Isaac II and Alexios III dealt with the disturbances in the northern Balkans and assess their respective policies within the chronological and temporal limits of the reigns.

When Isaac ascended the throne in September 1185 he was immediately faced with the Norman invasion of the Balkans; Dyrrachion and Thessalonike had already fallen and the Norman forces were marching unopposed towards Constantinople. The new emperor launched a massive counter-offensive which succeeded in swiftly expelling the invaders and subsequently negotiated an important alliance (or rather a renewal of the pre-existing alliance) with the Hungarians whereby he married the daughter of King Béla III, Margaret, and restored the *status quo ante* in the western Balkans.<sup>9</sup> The agreement not only secured peace in the empire's northwestern frontier, putting an end to Hungarian encroachment, but also resolved the question of Serbia, to which Béla formally renounced all claims.<sup>10</sup> The marriage, however, produced an unexpected result. Isaac had intended that the royal wedding be paid from the imperial estates, but demands were also made on Anchialos and other neighboring towns, provoking the local inhabitants to rebellion.<sup>11</sup> The situation was further aggravated when the emperor refused to enlist the local Vlach leaders, the brothers Theodore and Asen, in the imperial forces and grant them an estate producing a small income in the vicinity of the Haimos Mountains.<sup>12</sup> The two brothers enlisted the support of St. Demetrios to their cause in order to mobilize their compatriots and launched a full-scale rebellion.<sup>13</sup> Without opposition they extended their control over the regions outside the Haimos Mountains. Theodore assumed the name Peter, after Peter I who had ruled Bulgaria in the tenth century, and was crowned tsar. Having failed to capture Preslav, the capital of the First Bulgarian Empire, the rebels commenced their devastating raids.<sup>14</sup> Isaac responded with a series of counter-offensives in the following decade, but achieved limited success. The fighting seems to have mainly taken place in the regions extending from Sofia and Lovitzos (Loveč) to the west, to Anchialos and Varna on the Black Sea in the east, and as far as Arkadiopolis in Thrace to the south.<sup>15</sup>

The events of the struggle need not be recounted here. However, I would like to draw attention to several points of interest. With regards to the origins of the rebellion, Isaac has often received the bulk of the blame. More specifically, the emperor is said to have exercised poor judgment when he made extraordinary demands on the inhabitants of the Haimos Mountains and subsequently denied the modest requests of their local leaders, thus turning regional disaffection into ethnic separatism.<sup>16</sup> A careful reading of Niketas

Choniates, our sole contemporary source for the outbreak of the rebellion, tells a different story. The historian testifies to the following: "On account of his stinginess the emperor did not want to pay for the wedding festivities from the public treasury, so he collected these freely from his own lands. But due to his pettiness he did not notice that other cities, those situated around Anchialos, were also gleaned and that the inhabitants of the Haimos Mountains, formerly called Mysians, now Vlachs, were provoked to wage war against him and the Romans."<sup>17</sup> Significantly, he adds that the seizure of their livestock and their own ill-treatment formed the pretext for their rebellion.<sup>18</sup> This probably means that the imperial agents exceeded their instructions and made demands not only on imperial estates in the region but also on the towns around Anchialos, where they seized the livestock of the local inhabitants. Isaac was therefore not being stingy but collecting provisions for the wedding feast from his own (imperial) lands so as not to burden the public treasury with their purchase.<sup>19</sup>

Choniates then tells us that "the instigators of this evil," Peter and Asen, approached the emperor encamped at Kypsella in order to justify their rebellion.<sup>20</sup> This clearly implies that they knew beforehand that their request would be denied. As we have seen, the two brothers asked that they be recruited into the Byzantine army and be granted an estate in the vicinity of the Haimos that would provide them with a little revenue.<sup>21</sup> When their request was rejected they became angry and uttered heated words that threatened rebellion. Unfortunately, Choniates does not explain why their request was denied and the refusal seems strange when we consider that Isaac was still engaged in fighting against the Normans, and thus presumably had every reason to grant a request that would have boosted the size of his army. The request of Peter and Asen must have been presented when the emperor was at Kypsella. This was an important station point for military campaigns in the twelfth century, and is most often recorded in connection with military preparations and as a location for the concentration of troops.<sup>22</sup> The only time that Isaac would have been at Kypsella in this period was at the outset of his campaign to recapture Dyrrachion from the Normans in the winter of 1185–6.<sup>23</sup> So it would seem that Peter and Asen approached the emperor at precisely the right time. Why then was their request denied, and how could they have known this beforehand?

In order to answer these questions we should first consider the fact that Peter and Asen were admitted before the emperor's presence. This suggests: (i) that their status was somewhat more exalted than that of simple soldiers; and (ii) that what they requested was something more than a modest land grant.<sup>24</sup> Second, we also need to consider the fact that Peter and Asen were subsequently able to mobilize the inhabitants of the Haimos Mountains to rebel against imperial authority under their leadership. This indicates that

they were already in a position of power at the local level. What that position may have been is difficult to ascertain but perhaps the status of other prominent Vlachs in Byzantine service can provide some clues.<sup>25</sup> One such Vlach was Dobromir Chrysos, who, according to Choniates had fought as an "ally" in the imperial armies along with the five hundred countrymen under his command in the initial stages of the rebellion.<sup>26</sup> Significantly, Choniates also notes that the rebellious Vlachs were already in possession of the forts on the Haimos Mountains.<sup>27</sup> If the status of Peter and Asen was in any way similar to that of their compatriots, then that would mean that they were part of a local military elite who based their power in the region on the forts and men under their command.<sup>28</sup> It would also explain why they were admitted before the emperor and why they were able to undertake leadership of the rebellion. It thus seems probable that at Kypsella the two brothers requested some sort of additional (land-holding?) benefits in order to fight in the imperial armies in this particular campaign and were refused. Whatever the case, it is important to remember that the refusal of their request was expected and served as an excuse for a rebellion that had already been decided.<sup>29</sup>

It is therefore clear that the outbreak of the Vlach-Bulgarian insurrection should not be consigned to Isaac's carelessness or misjudgment. The revolt broke out at a most favorable occasion, that is, when the empire was still engaged in fighting against the Norman invaders, and was provoked by the arbitrary seizure of the local population's livestock. Significantly, Choniates notes that the first stirrings were already present: "Relying on the roughness of the terrain and emboldened by their fortresses, which were many and stood upright on steep cliffs, they had boasted of their victories against the Romans in other times, and then finding a pretext, which is called that of Patroklos—the confiscation of their livestock and their own ill-treatment—they leaped at open rebellion."<sup>30</sup> This statement suggests an inherent desire for autonomy as well as a tendency toward emancipation from Byzantine rule.<sup>31</sup> Elsewhere Choniates states that the intention of the rebels was to unite the rule of Mysia and Bulgaria into one empire as in olden times, thus acknowledging the ethnic dimension of the rebellion from the outset.<sup>32</sup> This ethnic dimension is also borne out by the initial actions of the rebels—the appropriation of the cult of St. Demetrios, the coronation of Peter, and the assault on Preslav—and ultimately explains why a trivial cause such as the arbitrary seizure of the local population's livestock led to a rebellion of such massive proportions.<sup>33</sup>

Still as Choniates holds Isaac responsible for the outbreak of the conflict, so he blames him for its escalation. Isaac moved swiftly, or as swiftly as he could under the circumstances, personally leading the campaign into the Haimos Mountains in the spring of 1186.<sup>34</sup> The emperor was successful in driving the rebels beyond the Danube, but only temporarily. The Vlach-Bulgarians returned, and taking advantage of their Cuman allies and mountain



strongholds, soon re-established themselves. Isaac personally led major campaigns against them in 1187, 1188, and 1190 but could not force a decisive encounter with the rebels, who wisely refused to engage the Byzantine army in the open.<sup>35</sup> These campaigns, which must have involved considerable resources, brought forth negligible results.<sup>36</sup> It is, therefore, unsurprising that the emperor changed tactics: in 1192 the rebel leader Peter was won over to the Byzantine side and the orators at the imperial court looked forward to the imminent destruction of Asen.<sup>37</sup> The following year Isaac entrusted the struggle to his cousin Constantine Angelos, appointing him commander at Philippopolis so as to bolster the Byzantine defenses in the key region of central Thrace. Angelos seems to have recovered the initiative against the Vlach-Bulgarians by successfully repelling their incursions, but he rebelled against the emperor and was deprived of his command.<sup>38</sup> Thereafter the Vlach-Bulgarians along with their Cuman allies resumed their devastating raids. Following the defeat of the Byzantine army led by the generals Alexios Gidos and Basil Vatatzes at Arkadiopolis in 1194, Isaac decided to launch a massive counter-offensive, this time with the assistance of his father-in-law, Béla of Hungary, who was to attack the rebels from the north by way of Vidin on the Danube.<sup>39</sup> His plan was never realized because he was deposed in the spring of 1195.<sup>40</sup>

The war against the Vlach-Bulgarians was therefore characterized by temporary advances and repeated setbacks. The emperor's efforts were frustrated first and foremost by the alliance between the Vlach-Bulgarians and the Cumans. The latter contributed significantly to the success of the rebellion by providing a seemingly unlimited supply of manpower from beyond the Danube that was dedicated to raiding and pillaging.<sup>41</sup> The alliance was made possible because for the greater part of the twelfth century the lands of the Lower Danube region (i.e., the Paradounavon) were lands with impoverished or semi-destroyed settlements and no permanent defense forces. These conditions allowed for the ascendancy of Cuman power beyond the Danube frontier, and when rebellion broke out in the Haimos Mountains, the Cuman fighters easily crossed the unprotected frontiers.<sup>42</sup> Second, the passage of the Third Crusade (1189-90) prevented the Byzantines from taking any concrete action against the rebels at that time. The dangerous encounter with the German crusaders, who occupied and devastated much of Thrace, and the possibility of their collusion with the Serbs and the Vlach-Bulgarians—who had willingly offered the crusaders their services against the Greeks in return for recognition of their autonomous polities—ended with the signing of a peace treaty in Adrianople (14 February 1190).<sup>43</sup> Third, there were repeated revolts by the Byzantine military commanders assigned to the front.<sup>44</sup> Early in the struggle, Isaac's uncle, the *sebastokrator* John Angelos rebelled. According to Choniates, he had achieved success by harassing the enemy with constant

attacks and preventing them from descending into the plains.<sup>45</sup> In the summer of 1187, the celebrated general Alexios Branas rebelled and utilized the armed forces that had been collected to fight against the Vlach-Bulgarians to besiege Constantinople.<sup>46</sup> Finally, we have seen that Constantine Angelos, who had been successful in checking the advances of the Vlach-Bulgarians, also rebelled. Thereafter, according to Choniates, the rebels destroyed everything in sight, even attacking important Byzantine cities such as Philippopolis, Sofia, and Adrianople.<sup>47</sup>

We must be careful not to attribute the blame for these internal struggles on Isaac (as Choniates does). The emperor was still at pains to establish himself firmly in power and his claim to the throne was only one in a series of competing claims put forth by members of the extended Komnenian family. The situation was not so unusual. Alexios I Komnenos (1081-1118) had faced nineteen rebellions in his first twenty years in power. In the remaining seventeen there were almost no conspiracies or insurrections, something that suggests that it took the emperor almost two decades to completely secure the throne.<sup>48</sup> At the same time, he required more than ten years to pacify the northern Balkans.<sup>49</sup> This is not to suggest that Isaac would have eventually been successful for he was confronted with a very different situation. The various peoples who inhabited the Balkans, most notably the Serbs and the Vlach-Bulgarians, were in the process of asserting their autonomy at the expense of the empire. Increased contacts with Western Europe through Hungarian expansionism, the Norman invasions (1081-5, 1107-8, 1185), the passing crusades (1096-9, 1147-9, 1189-92), and the reformed papacy encouraged their efforts by providing alternative centers of political power to which they could readily appeal in order to legitimize their independence from Constantinople.<sup>50</sup> Nevertheless, all the evidence seems to confirm that despite repeated setbacks Isaac actively sought a resolution to the conflicts in the northern Balkans.

In 1191 the emperor conducted military operations against the Vlach-Bulgarians and the Cumans from his base at Philippopolis. He then advanced against the Serbs "for having ravaged the land and destroyed Skopje" and gained what the Byzantine sources describe as a victory somewhere on the Morava River.<sup>51</sup> The peace treaty that followed, again according to Byzantine sources, restored Serbia to its position of servitude and was sealed by the marriage of Isaac's niece, Eudokia, to Stefan Nemanja's second son Stefan (the First-Crowned).<sup>52</sup> This was the first marriage contracted between the ruling houses of Byzantium and Serbia but it did not amount to recognition of independence or imply a new status for the Serbian territories.<sup>53</sup> Serbia remained a tributary state, as it had been under the Komnenoi. As Isaac himself declared shortly thereafter, "Serbia has been subject to the empire since ancient times and has never been given to anyone else."<sup>54</sup> With regard



to territorial concessions, the emperor is said to have recognized Nemanja's entitlement to a substantial portion of the territories he had conquered in the previous decade but the Serbian ruler was forced to return the vital lands along the Morava, notably Niš and its surrounding area, and those in the region of the upper Vardar, including Skopje. He also had to relinquish part of the Kosovo-Metohija area, including Prizren and Polog.<sup>55</sup>

Following his victory over the Serbs, Isaac met with his father-in-law, Béla of Hungary. In an oration delivered probably in 1192, Choniates speaks of two separate meetings: the Hungarian king first traveled south to meet the emperor in an unknown location but presumably within imperial territory. Béla is said to have honored the emperor with gifts and made obeisance to him. The Hungarian king is also said to have praised the imperial victory—despite the fact that he had done nothing to encourage it—and deriving great benefit for his own domains, he heralded the emperor's deeds throughout his land of the Hungarians in order to prepare the emperor's visit. Isaac then marched north to the Sava River for the second meeting, which probably took place at Sirmium. This was an impressively staged encounter with the emperor arriving by ship to a ceremonial reception at which Béla and the Hungarian elite were all present. Here, always according to Choniates, the subordinate status of Hungary was demonstrated in a most spectacular manner: "Thus the Istros was traversed without battle, the Hungarians bent their knees without recourse to arms and killing, and greeted the emperor of the Romans as their despot."<sup>56</sup> Choniates's description, despite its rhetorical flourish and propagandistic intent, suggests that these meetings were primarily intended to reaffirm the Byzantine position in the region of the western Balkans (especially with regard to Serbia) and ensure the alliance and loyalty of the Hungarians.<sup>57</sup>

The arrangements with the Serbs and the Hungarians were not to be taken lightly. When Béla invaded Serbia most probably at the end of 1192/beginning of 1193, Isaac threatened to send reinforcements to the Serbs and appealed to Pope Celestine III (1191–8) to force the Hungarians to withdraw, thus defending Byzantine rights over the Serbian territories.<sup>58</sup> Following the defeat of the Byzantine forces at Arkadiopolis (1194), a location dangerously close to Constantinople, Béla, acting as an ally of the emperor, agreed to attack the Vlach–Bulgarians from the north in conjunction with a Byzantine attack from the south, but the planned campaign was aborted when Isaac was deposed while encamped at Kypsella.<sup>59</sup> Although Isaac had relinquished control of territories to the Hungarians and the Serbs in the western Balkans, his policy of a peaceful resolution to the conflicts in this area can only be described as pragmatic under the circumstances. In any case, the lands that reverted to the Hungarian crown had only come under Byzantine control in recent decades and only after a series of hard-fought wars (1162–7). Likewise,

the separatist tendencies of the Serbs had to be repeatedly restrained by force in the not so distant past (1162, 1168, and 1172) and Isaac was able to secure their submission and also to retain the Byzantine position west of the Morava, and especially along the military road from Belgrade (through Niš, Sofia, Philippopolis, Adrianople) to Constantinople, and in southern Macedonia. What is more, the emperor's marriage diplomacy tied both Hungary and Serbia to the Byzantine Empire; the former through alliance and the latter through acquiescence. It is true that the Byzantine defeat at Arkadiopolis marks the penetration of the Vlach–Bulgarians rebels into southern Thrace, but Isaac was quick to recognize the danger and planned a massive counter-offensive, which, as we have seen, was never realized.

The situation in the northern Balkans becomes somewhat confused during the reign of Isaac's successor, Alexios III. It is immediately noticeable that the geography of the struggle during this period was transferred from the regions of the Haimos Mountains and central Thrace to the Rhodope Mountains, eastern and central Macedonia, and southern Thrace. This has been taken to mean that the former areas had now effectively slipped from imperial control.<sup>60</sup> Yet the extent of Vlach–Bulgarian occupation during this period remains uncertain. The major cities and outposts in the former regions remained in Byzantine hands, including Philippopolis and Beroe in central Thrace, and the ports of Anchialos and Varna on the Black Sea coast.<sup>61</sup> In this context, it is significant to note that Choniates repeatedly refers to incursions, plundering, and ravaging rather than conquest and occupation. His narrative also makes clear the fact that in the cases where the rebels attempted to occupy cities and fortresses, they were generally unsuccessful. For example, in c. 1190 the Vlach–Bulgarians sacked Anchialos, took Varna, razed Sardica, and plundered Stoumbion and Niš. But Isaac's commanders swiftly recovered Varna and Anchialos, strengthening the fortifications of the latter and installing a garrison within.<sup>62</sup> In c. 1193 the rebels set out to attack Philippopolis, Sofia, and Adrianople; though they devastated the lands en route, they failed to capture these cities.<sup>63</sup> What is more, the so-called "Bulgarian Imitative" coins, identified as such on the basis of hoards deposited in the region of the Thracian Plain and the Strymon Valley between c. 1195 and c. 1210 and taken as evidence that the Vlach–Bulgarians had begun striking their own coins, are no longer considered to have been of Bulgarian provenance since these "faithful imitations" of Byzantine originals circulated in all the regions of the empire between c. 1195 and c. 1250.<sup>64</sup>

Finally, we need to consider that Alexios III fought less against the Vlach–Bulgarians, who from 1197 were led by the formidable Kalojan (Ioannitsa), and more against the rebellious Vlach commanders employed in his service.<sup>65</sup> Indeed, his first act as emperor was to dismiss the army amassed by his predecessor to fight against the Vlach–Bulgarians and to sue for peace. Since the



conditions proposed by the rebels were unacceptable, hostilities were soon resumed. In the autumn of 1195 the Vlach-Bulgarians invaded the regions around Serrai on the Rhodope Mountains, defeated the Byzantine forces stationed there, and captured the governor Alexios Aspietes. The emperor dispatched a relief force under the command of his son-in-law, the *sebastokrator* Isaac Komnenos, but the latter was defeated and captured.<sup>66</sup> When civil war broke out in the Vlach-Bulgarian camp the following year Alexios responded favorably to the request for Byzantine aid from the Vlach commander Ivanko who had murdered Asen, taken possession of Tărnovo, and was now besieged by an army of his compatriots led by Peter. The campaign, led by the *protostrator* Manuel Kamytzes, ended in a fiasco when the Byzantine forces mutinied and refused to cross the Haimos Mountains. Since the Byzantines failed to arrive, Ivanko was forced to flee Tărnovo and seek refuge in Constantinople. With the opportunity to gain possession of the Vlach-Bulgarian heartland lost the emperor seems to have given up on the idea of mounting major campaigns against the rebels.<sup>67</sup>

His new strategy, as reflected in Choniates's narrative, was to employ Vlach-Bulgarian commanders to the front. The divide and rule tactic was standard Byzantine practice for dealing with rebellious peoples but it always carried a high risk of treason.<sup>68</sup> On the other hand, Alexios may have been wary of committing the empire's resources to major campaigns against the rebels given the repeated setbacks suffered during the reign of Isaac and his own experience with the aborted campaign of Manuel Kamytzes. He may have also wished to employ Vlach-Bulgarian commanders because they were more experienced in the military tactics of their compatriots and could also utilize their own forces in the struggle. In 1197, however, the emperor was forced to march out against the Vlach Dobromir Chrysos, who had been assigned the command of Strummitsa, a site not far from the regions around Serrai, which had been recently overrun by Vlach-Bulgarian rebels. Once in Strummitsa, Dobromir Chrysos repudiated Byzantine authority, took possession of the fortress of Prosakos, and extended his control over the surrounding region. Following two unsuccessful campaigns the emperor came to terms with Dobromir Chrysos: the rebel recognized Byzantine suzerainty and retained control of Prosakos, Strummitsa, and all the neighboring lands. He was also provided with a Byzantine bride, the daughter of the *protostrator* Manuel Kamytzes.<sup>69</sup> Not long after, the emperor was faced with the rebellion of another Vlach commander, Ivanko (1200). The latter, having fled Tărnovo, was well received in Constantinople. Betrothed to a Byzantine princess, Alexios's own granddaughter Theodora, he was entrusted with the sensitive command of Philippopolis, from where, according to Choniates, he was not only successful in repelling the Vlach-Bulgarian raids but also in reclaiming numerous fortresses along the Haimos Mountains (1197-1200).<sup>70</sup> Ivanko's

rebellion was a grave threat. From his strongholds on the Haimos, he extended his sway over Mosynopolis, Xantheia, and Abdera near the Aegean coast, and subjugated the theme of Smolena in the middle Strymon Valley. In the end the emperor managed to have the rebel seized and executed, thus regaining control of the Rhodope region and central Thrace.<sup>71</sup>

Yet the strategy of employing Vlach commanders to the front and entrusting them with important commands in areas south of the Haimos Mountains had effectively backfired, and the emperor was continually preoccupied with keeping them in line. In the meantime, Choniates reports that a Vlach and Cuman raiding party crossed the Danube and reached as far as the southern Thracian towns around Mesene and Tzouroulos (spring 1199). In a further incursion, Cuman forces are said to have overrun all of Macedonia, attacking well-fortified cities and despoiling the monasteries on Mount Ganos, north of the Gallipoli peninsula.<sup>72</sup> In the following year the Vlach and Cuman raiding parties would have reached the walls of Constantinople had not the Russians of Galicia and Volynia attacked their lands and forced them to withdraw.<sup>73</sup> To make matters worse, in 1201 Kalojan undertook a major expedition that resulted in the capture of Constantia near the junction of the Rhodope and Haimos Mountains and Varna on the Black Sea coast.<sup>74</sup> The loss of the important port of Varna was nothing less than devastating for Byzantium, for it considerably undermined any future efforts to recover the territories north of the Haimos and ceded control of the sea route between the capital and the cities of the Lower Danube to the Vlach-Bulgarians.<sup>75</sup>

In 1202 Alexios came to terms; according to the Byzantine sources, Kalojan agreed to withdraw to his mountains, a statement which has been taken to mean that the Haimos Mountains now constituted the border between Byzantium and the Vlach-Bulgarian state. In exchange for recognition of his territories, Kalojan undertook to defend the empire against its enemies, presumably the Cuman raiders who had recently caused such devastation but more importantly those Vlach commanders still attempting to establish their own principalities in imperial territory south of the Haimos Mountains.<sup>76</sup> According to Nikephoros Chrysoberges, Kalojan assisted Alexios in his struggle against Dobromir Chrysos, who along with his father-in-law, Manuel Kamytzes, had rebelled once again, this time seizing Prilep and Pelagonia, occupying Thessaly, and causing disturbances as far as Hellas and the Peloponnesos.<sup>77</sup> In his correspondence with Pope Innocent III (1198-1216), Kalojan later claimed that the Byzantine emperor promised him an imperial coronation should he come to Constantinople, and a patriarch for the church in Tărnovo. The letter in question was written in August 1203 and in the context of Kalojan's efforts to gain recognition of his royal title (something obviously not granted by the Byzantines) from Rome in exchange for submission to papal authority.<sup>78</sup> If Alexios did make such an offer, it was certainly

calculated to counter the papacy's concerted efforts to extend its influence in the northern Balkans.<sup>79</sup> In the end, however, Kalojan received his crown with the permission and blessings of Innocent III in November 1204.

With regard to the western Balkans in this period, the Byzantine sources are almost completely silent. The Hungarians all but disappear from Choniates' narrative probably because relations between Byzantium and Hungary were negatively affected by the overthrow of Isaac.<sup>80</sup> This was a serious development that has gone largely unnoticed. The Hungarians had been Byzantium's staunchest allies in the region during the previous decade despite the intermittent conflicts that occurred between the two states.<sup>81</sup> The alliance, however, was entirely based on the personal ties developed between Isaac and Béla. When these ties were severed on account of the usurpation of Alexios, the alliance simply ended. The consequences were evident by the beginning of the thirteenth century if not earlier. When Kalojan of Bulgaria invaded Serbia and occupied the region of Niš in the summer of 1203, the new Hungarian king, Imre (1196–1204), claimed that Serbia was subject to the Hungarian crown. He also asserted that the lands that had been occupied by Kalojan in the previous years had been given by his father (Béla III) as a dowry to his sister Margaret, the empress of the Greeks.<sup>82</sup> Thus, Imre felt that the territories that comprised Margaret's dowry—these were probably located along the Danube frontier since Kalojan's westward expansion had included the conquest of Sirmium, Braničevo, and Belgrade—were rightfully his,<sup>83</sup> and may have claimed them as early as after the deposition of his brother-in-law Isaac in 1195.<sup>84</sup> What is certain is that by 1202 the Hungarian king had claimed suzerainty over Serbia, styling himself *rex Serviae*.<sup>85</sup>

The change of leadership in Constantinople affected Byzantium's relations with Serbia as well. The Serbs are mentioned in the Byzantine sources in connection with the quarrel that developed between Stefan Nemanja's second son, Stefan, and his Byzantine wife, Eudokia. By this time Eudokia's father had ascended the Byzantine throne as Alexios III. Likewise Stefan (rather than Nemanja's eldest son, Vukan) inherited the Serbian throne following the abdication of his father (1196). The succession of Stefan rather than Vukan was probably connected with the accession of Alexios since it was only natural for the Serbian ruling dynasty to take advantage of its newly established connection to the Byzantine throne. Indeed, as the son-in-law of the new emperor Stefan was soon granted the elevated title of *sebastokrator*.<sup>86</sup> This dignity, which was reserved for members of the imperial family, served to bind the Serbian ruler to the Constantinopolitan court but at the same time denied him independent status.<sup>87</sup> For Alexios, whose accession had caused the dissolution of the Byzantine–Hungarian alliance, it must have seemed like the perfect arrangement, especially since his daughter Eudokia was now designated “joint heir to the paternal satrapy” of her husband.<sup>88</sup> In the event,

Stefan's inclusion into the Byzantine imperial family was not enough to prevent him from dismissing Eudokia and sending her back to Byzantium.<sup>89</sup> Interestingly, Choniates tells us that Vukan, Stefan's brother, had opposed the divorce and attempted to dissuade Stefan from this reprehensible course of action. When Stefan sent Eudokia away in disgrace, Vukan willingly provided her with a fitting escort to conduct her safely to Dyrrachion.<sup>90</sup> Choniates then notes the conflict between Stefan and Vukan for control of Serbia.<sup>91</sup> Although he does not connect these events, it is conceivable that the repudiation of Stefan's Byzantine bride presented Vukan with the opportunity to make overtures to Byzantium. If this was the case, Alexios does not seem to have responded. But there were other options.

As early as 1199 Vukan, who had received possession of Zeta as a consolation prize for being passed over for the Serbian throne and had subsequently declared his independence and styled himself king of Duklja and Dalmatia, approached Innocent III with a view to acquiring recognition of his royal title in return for submission to Rome. At the same time he sought the friendship and support of the Hungarians. In 1201 or 1202, his brother Stefan, who presumably felt threatened by Vukan, likewise solicited the support of the papacy, offering his submission to Rome and seeking to obtain a royal crown from Innocent III. In this context, Stefan's divorce from his Byzantine bride Eudokia can be seen as the consequence of the Serbian ruler's attempt to align himself with the papacy and thereby neutralize his brother's alliances.<sup>92</sup> Although the pope seems to have initially favored Stefan's request, the intervention of the Hungarians, who had their own plans for the Serbian territories, prevented the coronation. In 1202 Vukan seized Serbia with Hungarian aid and recognized Hungarian suzerainty. This action, like the divorce of Stefan and Eudokia, provoked no response from Byzantium. In the following year Kalojan attacked Serbia, which was now caught between Hungary and Bulgaria rather than Hungary and Byzantium. It should be noted that during this period, the Byzantine emperor was entirely consumed with fighting against the rebellion of Dobromir Chrysos and Manuel Kamytzes in southern Macedonia and Thessaly as well as that of a certain John Spyridonakes in the district of Smolena.<sup>93</sup> Thereafter, if not before, he received news of the crusade that intended to place his nephew on the Byzantine throne.<sup>94</sup> Thus, any thoughts Alexios may have entertained of involvement in the western Balkans were not to be realized.

It is difficult to reach secure conclusions on the status of the Byzantine Balkans at the time of the arrival of the Fourth Crusade in Constantinople in June 1203. But whereas Isaac had repeatedly committed substantial resources to the region, fighting major campaigns against the Vlach–Bulgarian rebels for control of the Paradounavon, the Haimos Mountains, and central Thrace, Alexios relinquished the struggle to various Vlach leaders whom he entrusted

with the command of key positions. This seems to have initially paid off, at least in the case of Ivanko during 1197–1200, but in the long term the emperor was entirely preoccupied with combating his own rebel commanders. Although by his victories over the rebels in 1200–2 Alexios was able to recover northern Thrace and the Rhodope from Ivanko, regain the conquests of Dobromir Chrysos in Macedonia, and expel Manuel Kamytzes from Thessaly and John Spyridonakes from Smolena, these conflicts effectively prevented him from making any headway against the Vlach–Bulgarian realm proper and from intervening in the serious disturbances in the western Balkans. Here Isaac's policy had been realistic and successful. The change of leadership in Constantinople, however, was crucial to the delicate balance of power in the western Balkans foremost because it marked the end of the Byzantine–Hungarian alliance. Although it is undeniable that Byzantine authority in the northern Balkans waned in the later twelfth century, this does not necessarily mean that there occurred a progressive deterioration of the imperial position in the region or that the successors of Manuel were either unable or unwilling to preserve the frontiers as has so often been assumed. It is not, after all, coincidental that Byzantium's prestige declined along with the retreat of its northern Balkan frontiers precisely during the period 1195–1203.

## NOTES

1. This chapter was written in the framework of the research project SH6-1973 ISAACANG under the auspices of the Action "Supporting Postdoctoral Researchers" of the Operational Program "Education and Lifelong Learning" co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Greek State. Many thanks are owed to Tilemachos Lounghis and Vlada Stanković for their comments and suggestions.

2. On these developments, see P. Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143–1180* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 78–83; P. Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier: A Political Study of the Northern Balkans, 900–1204* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 266–9.

3. Cf. Magdalino, *Manuel Komnenos*, 132–7; Stephenson, *Balkan Frontier*, pp. 105–7, 183–6, 194–6; F. Curta, *Southeastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 500–1250* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 319–27. On the economy of the Balkan Peninsula, the concentration or urban settlements, and the distribution of population, see M. F. Hendy, *Studies on the Byzantine Monetary Economy, c. 300–1450* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 35–9, 44–58, 78–90.

4. The extent of the Hungarian occupation in the region of Niš–Braničevo remains uncertain as does the claim that Isaac II Angelos accepted Hungarian authority in Dalmatia and Sirmium as part of the agreement with Béla III. See F. Makk, *The Árpáds and the Comnenoi: Political Relations between Hungary and Byzantium in the 12th Century* (Budapest, 1989), pp. 115–20, 176 no. 141, 177, no. 150.

5. S. Hafner, *Serbisches Mittelalter. Altserbische Herrscherbiographien. I. Stefan Nemanja nach den Viten des hl. Sava und Stefans des Erstgekrönten* (Graz, 1962), pp. 87 ff.; C. Jireček, *Geschichte der Serben, I (bis 1371)* (Gotha, 1911; repr. Amsterdam, 1967), pp. 264 ff.; J. V. A. Fine, *The Late Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the Late Twelfth Century to the Ottoman Conquest* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1987), pp. 7–9.

6. On the treaty of recognition, see *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des östlichen Reiches von 565–1453, vol. II, 1025–1204*, eds. F. Dölger and P. Wirth, (2nd ed., Munich, 1995), no. 1661b.

7. See the review of the literature in M. Angold, "The State of Research: The Road to 1204: The Byzantine Background to the Fourth Crusade," *Journal of Medieval History* 25/3 (1999), pp. 257–78.

8. A recent exception is the analytical study of M. Ritter, "Die vlacho-bulgarische Rebellion und die Versuche ihrer Niederschlagung durch Kaiser Isaakios II. (1185–1195)," *Byzantinoslavica* 71 (2013), pp. 162–210.

9. *Nicetae Choniatae Historia*, ed. J.-L. van Dieten (Berlin–New York, 1975), p. 368, and *Nicetae Choniatae orationes et epistulae*, ed. J.-L. van Dieten (Berlin–New York, 1972), pp. 36–7, 39. On the date of the wedding (February 1186?), see J.-L. van Dieten, *Niketas Choniates. Erläuterungen zu den Reden und Briefen nebst einer Biographie* (Berlin–New York, 1971), pp. 88–9.

10. The terms of the alliance are stipulated in J. Darrouzès (ed.), *Georges et Démétrios Tornikès, lettres et discours* (Paris, 1970), p. 343. On the importance of Serbia, see V. Laurent, "La Serbie entre Byzance et la Hongrie à la veille de la quatrième croisade," *Revue historique du Sud-Est Européen* 28 (1941), pp. 119–20; Dölger-Wirth, *Regesten*, nos. 1567d, 1567e; G. Prinzing, "Das Papsttum und die orthodox geprägte Südosten Europas, 1180–1216," in E.-D. Hehl, H. Ringel, and H. Seibert (eds.), *Das Papsttum in der Welt des 12. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart, 2002), p. 146.

11. Choniates, *Historia*, p. 368.

12. Choniates, *Historia*, p. 369.

13. Choniates, *Historia*, pp. 371–2. There is now a vast literature on the rebellion. See R. L. Wolff, "The Second Bulgarian Empire. Its Origin and History to 1204," *Speculum* 24 (1949), pp. 167–206 = *Studies on the Latin Empire of Constantinople* (London, 1976), III; C. M. Brand, *Byzantium Confronts the West (1180–1204)*, (Cambridge MA, 1968), pp. 88–96, 125–35; G. Cankova-Petkova, "La libération de la Bulgarie de la domination byzantine," *ByzBulg* 5 (1978), pp. 95–121; Ph. Malinoudis, "Die Nachrichten des Niketas Choniates über die Entstehung des Zweiten Bulgarischen Staates," *Bož arivá* 10 (1980), pp. 51–147; D. Angelov, "Der Aufstand der Asener und die Wiederherstellung des bulgarischen Staates," *Études Balkaniques* 21/III (1985), pp. 3–16; Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, pp. 10–17, 25–33; Stephenson, *Balkan Frontier*, pp. 288–94, 300–12; G. Prinzing, "Die Demetrios-Kirche und Aseniden-Aufstand. Zur chronologischen Präzisierung der Frühphase des Aseniden-Aufstandes," *ZRVI* 38 (1999/2000), pp. 257–65; and Ritter, "Die vlacho-bulgarische Rebellion."

14. Choniates, *Historia*, p. 372.

15. See in detail, Ritter, "Die vlacho-bulgarische Rebellion," pp. 180 ff.



16. See, for example, Cankova-Petkova, "La Liberation," p. 98; Stephenson, *Balkan Frontier*, p. 293; P. Magdalino, "The Empire of the Komnenoi," in J. Shepard (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire, c. 500–1492* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 655–6.

17. Choniates, *Historia*, p. 368.

18. Choniates, *Historia*, p. 368: πρόφασιν εὐρηκότες. This agrees with the account of George Akropolites who states that the seizure of their sheep, pigs, and oxen was the pretext for the rebellion. Cf. George Akropolites, *Opera*, I, ed. A. Heisenberg (Leipzig, 1903); repr. with corrections P. Wirth (Stuttgart, 1978), p. 18.

19. I have followed the interpretation of Magdalino, *Manuel Komnenos*, pp. 134–5, note 99.

20. Choniates, *Historia*, p. 369: μὴ δρῶντες τὴν νεωτέρεισιν ἀπροφάσιστον.

21. On whether the request amounted to a pronoiā grant, see M. C. Bartusis, *Land and Privilege in Byzantium: The Institution of Pronoiā* (Cambridge, 2012), pp. 98–9 and bibliography therein.

22. Cf. P. Soustal, *Thrakien (Thrakē, Rodopē und Haimimontos)*, *Tabula Imperii Byzantini* 6 (Vienna, 1991), pp. 330–1.

23. Cf. Brand, *Byzantium Confronts the West*, p. 89; Ritter, "Die vlachobulgarische Rebellion," pp. 172–3. The campaign is related by Gregory Antiochos in *Fontes Rerum Byzantinorum. Rhetorum saeculi XII orationes politicae*, V. E. Regel and N. I. Novosadskij (eds.), I (1–2) (St. Petersburg, 1892; repr. Leipzig, 1982), p. 301.

24. On the strength of Robert of Clari (*La Conquête de Constantinople*, ed. P. Lauer [Paris, 1924], p. 63) it has been suggested that the two brothers were already in Byzantine service and approached the emperor to receive further benefits. Cf. Malingoudis, "Nachrichten," pp. 84–8; F. Dall'Aglia, "Qualche considerazione sulla fondazione del 'Secondo Regno Bulgaro,'" *Ricerche slavistiche* 9 (2011), p. 59, note 9; Ritter, "Die vlachobulgarische Rebellion," pp. 172–3.

25. According to Robert of Clari, Asen (who is confused with Kalojan) was in charge of one of the imperial horse farms, and obliged to provide the emperor between sixty and one hundred horses upon request (i.e., for military campaigns). This does not tell us much, except perhaps that the brothers were pastoralists and not landowners.

26. Choniates, *Historia*, p. 487: ἐνσπονδος.

27. Choniates, *Historia*, p. 368.

28. On this, see the comments of Alexandru Madgearu (*Byzantine Military Organization on the Danube, 10th–12th Centuries* [Leiden, 2013], p. 159), who views the military services rendered by the Vlachs of the Haimos Mountains akin to those of the feudal armies in western Europe and explains this development with reference to the Komnenian policy of recruiting local populations (based on ethnic criteria) into the armed forces.

29. On this, see the comments of R. Guillard, "Byzance et les Balkans sous le règne d'Isaac II Ange (1185–1195)," in *Actes du XIIe Congrès international d'études byzantines, Ochrid 1961* (Belgrade, 1964), pp. 126–7; Cankova-Petkova, "La liberation," p. 104; L. Mavrommatis, "La formation du deuxième royaume Bulgare vue

par les intellectuels byzantins," *Études Balkaniques* 21/IV (1985), p. 34; Dall'Aglia, "Qualche considerazione," p. 60.

30. Choniates, *Historia*, p. 368.

31. On the autonomous tendencies of the local population, see A. Kolia-Dermizake, "Η εικόνα των Βουλγάρων και της χώρας τους στις Βυζαντινές πηγές του 11ου και 12ου αιώνα," in K. Nikolaou and K. Tsiknakas (eds.), *Βυζάντιο και Βούλγαροι (1018–1185)* (Athens, 2008), pp. 59–89.

32. Choniates, *Historia*, p. 374.

33. Chonates, *Historia*, pp. 371–2. Cf. Dall'Aglia, "Qualche considerazione," pp. 61–4.

34. Choniates, *Historia*, pp. 371–3.

35. Choniates, *Historia*, pp. 394–8, 399, 428–31.

36. See, for example, Choniates's description of the campaign of 1190: Choniates, *Orationes*, pp. 3–6, and the discussion in Ritter, "Die vlachobulgarische Rebellion," pp. 196–200.

37. Sergios Kolybas, in *Fontes Rerum Byzantinorum*, pp. 293–5; George Tornikes, there, pp. 264–8. Cf. A. Kazhdan, "La date de la rupture Pierre et Asen (vers 1193)," *Byz* 35 (1965), pp. 164–74.

38. Choniates, *Historia*, p. 435–7.

39. Choniates (*Historia*, p. 447) tells us that the emperor had already committed some 216,000 gold coins to this campaign alone. Compare this with the 288,000 gold coins sent to the Byzantine forces fighting against the Normans in 1185 (*Historia*, p. 357).

40. Choniates, *Historia*, pp. 448–52.

41. Cf. Brand, *Byzantium Confronts the West*, p. 88; Magdalino, *Manuel Komnenos*, pp. 133–4. On the importance of the Cumans, see A. Nikolov, "Cumani bellatores in the Second Bulgarian State (1186–1396)," *Annual of Medieval Studies at Central European University Budapest* 11 (2005), pp. 227–9; I. Vásáry, *Cumans and Tatars: Oriental Military in the Pre-Ottoman Balkans, 1185–1365* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 13 ff.; F. Dall'Aglia, "The Interaction Between Nomadic and Sedentary Peoples on the Lower Danube: The Cumans and the 'Second Bulgarian Empire,'" in F. Curta and B.-P. Maleon (eds.), *The Steppe Lands and the World Beyond Them: Studies in Honor of Victor Spinei on his 70th Birthday* (Iasi, 2013), pp. 309–10.

42. Cf. Madgearu, *Byzantine Military Organization*, pp. 144 ff.

43. Cf. *The Crusade of Frederick Barbarossa: The History of the Expedition of the Emperor Frederick and Related Texts*, trans. G. A. Loud (Farnham, 2010), pp. 61–4, 84–5.

44. This factor is emphasized by Stephenson, *Balkan Frontier*, p. 304, and Ritter, "Die vlachobulgarische Rebellion," p. 209.

45. Choniates, *Historia*, p. 374.

46. Choniates, *Historia*, pp. 376–89.

47. Choniates, *Historia*, p. 437.

48. Cf. Angold, "Byzantine Background," pp. 261–2.

49. On this, see Stephenson, *Balkan Frontier*, pp. 100–5; J. Birkenmeir, *The Development of the Komnenian Army: 1081–1180* (Leiden, 2002), p. 71 ff.

50. Cf. I. Dujčev, "Influences orientales et occidentales dans les Balkans aux Xe-XIIe siècles," *Byzantine Studies* 2 (1975), pp. 103–21; Stephenson, *Balkan Frontier*, p. 300.

51. Choniates, *Orationes*, pp. 27–32.

52. George Tornikes, in *Fontes Rerum Byzantinorum*, p. 277. Cf. Dölger-Wirth, *Regesten*, no. 1605.

53. In contracting the marriage, Isaac was following a trend initiated by the Komnenoi, whereby daughters and nieces were wed to a variety of foreign rulers (and not just kings and princes) so as to strengthen their ties with Byzantium and ensure their loyalty. Cf. Magdalino, *Manuel Komnenos*, pp. 201–17.

54. *Georges et Démétrios Tornikès*, p. 343. For the position of Serbia, see V. Stanković, "The Character and Nature of Byzantine Influence in Serbia (from the End of the Eleventh to the End of the Thirteenth Century): Reality—Policy—Ideology," in M. Angar and C. Sode (eds.), *Serbia and Byzantium* (Frankfurt am Main, 2013), pp. 85–9.

55. See in detail, Jireček, *Geschichte der Serben*, pp. 273–4; Brand, *Byzantium Confronts the West*, p. 94; Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, p. 26.

56. Choniates, *Orationes*, pp. 32–3.

57. Cf. G. Prinzing, "The Esztergom Reliquary Revisited. Wann, weshalb und wem hat Kaiser Isaakios II. Angelos die Staurothek als Geschenk übersandt?" in N. Asutay-Effenberger and F. Daim (eds.), *ΦΛΟΠΛΑΤΩΝ Spaziergang im kaiserlichen Garten. Beiträge zu Byzanz und seinen Nachbarn* (Mainz, 2012), pp. 251–2.

58. *Georges et Démétrios Tornikès*, p. 343. Cf. Dölger-Wirth, *Regesten*, no. 1614a; Prinzing, "Das Papsttum," pp. 149–50.

59. Brand, *Byzantium Confronts the West*, p. 94; Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, p. 27.

60. Cf. Brand, *Byzantium Confronts the West*, p. 96; Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, p. 27.

61. The chrysobull granted to the Venetians in 1198 refers to the *provincia Anchiali* and the *provincia Philipupleos, Veroyis, Moras et Achridij*. For the text, see M. Pozza and G. Ravagnani, *I trattati con Bizanzio 992–1198* (Venice, 1993), pp. 119–37. These provinces, along with many others located in central and northern Thrace, and eastern and central Macedonia, are omitted from the *Partitio Romaniae* (1204). According to Nikolaos Oikonomides, they remained loyal to Alexios III in opposition to the regime of Alexios IV in Constantinople. Cf. N. Oikonomides, "La Décomposition de l'Empire Byzantine à la veille de 1204 et les origines de l'Empire de Nicée: à propos de la *Partitio Romaniae*," in *XVe Congrès International d'Études Byzantines, Athènes 1976: Rapports et co-rapports*, I/1 (Athens, 1976), pp. 14–18 = *Byzantium from the Ninth Century to the Fourth Crusade: Studies, Texts, Monuments* (Aldershot, 1992), XX. Cf. also Soustal, *Thrakien*, pp. 99–103.

62. Choniates, *Historia*, p. 434.

63. Choniates, *Historia*, p. 437.

64. The theory of Bulgarian provenance was put forth by Michael Hendy. Cf. M. F. Hendy, *Catalogue of Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, IV (Washington, D.C., 1999), pp. 66–80, but challenged

primarily by David Metcalf and Ioannes Touratsoglou. Cf. especially Metcalf's review of Hendy in *Numismatic Chronicle* 160 (2000), pp. 396–401, and I. Touratsoglou, "La monnaie byzantine aux XIIe–XIIIe siècles et le monnayage des trouvailles de Grèce: à propos d'un ouvrage récent" *Revue numismatique* 158 (2002), pp. 385–404. I owe these references—and my understanding of the issues—to the kindness of Pagona Papadopoulou. Cf. P. Papadopoulou, *De l'unité à l'éclatement: la monnaie et son usage dans le monde byzantin (1092–1261)*, PhD diss. (Université Paris I, 2007), pp. 266–74.

65. Cf. Stephenson, *Balkan Frontier*, p. 306.

66. Choniates, *Historia*, pp. 465–9.

67. Choniates, *Historia*, pp. 469–72.

68. Cf. Stephenson, *Balkan Frontier*, pp. 306, 308.

69. Choniates, *Historia*, pp. 502–8. For the treaty, see Dölger-Wirth, *Regesten*, no. 1653.

70. Choniates, *Historia*, p. 509.

71. Choniates, *Historia*, pp. 509–14, 518–19.

72. Choniates, *Historia*, pp. 499–501, 508.

73. Choniates, *Historia*, pp. 523–4. This was presumably in accordance to an agreement reached in Constantinople the previous year. Cf. Brand, *Byzantium Confronts the West*, p. 132.

74. Choniates, *Historia*, p. 532.

75. Cf. Stephenson, *Balkan Frontier*, p. 310.

76. Choniates, *Orationes*, pp. 110–11; *Nicephori Chrysobergae Ad Angelos orationes tres*, ed. M. Treu, Programm des Königlichen Friedrichs-Gymnasiums zu Breslau, 1892 (Breslau, 1892), pp. 18–21, who speaks of *doulosyne*, which means that Kalojan had been granted authority over his domains by the emperor's concession. On the treaty, see Brand, *Byzantium Confronts the West*, pp. 134–5; Dölger-Wirth, *Regesten*, no. 1661b.

77. For the rebellion, see Choniates, *Historia*, pp. 533–4; Choniates, *Orationes*, pp. 108–10; Chrysoberges, *Angelos orationes*, pp. 15 ff. Brand, *Byzantium Confronts the West*, pp. 133–4.

78. Excerpts of the letter in K. Petkov, *The Voices of Medieval Bulgaria, Seventh–Fifteenth Centuries: Records of a Bygone Culture* (Leiden, 2008), pp. 221–2. On the correspondence, see Wolff, "Second Bulgarian Empire," pp. 190–8; Stephenson, *Balkan Frontier*, pp. 309–12; Prinzing, "Das Papsttum," pp. 166–72.

79. On Innocent III's policy in the Balkans, see Prinzing, "Das Papsttum," pp. 153–74 and F. Dall'Aglia, *Innocenzo III e i Balkani. Fede e politica nei Regesta pontifici* (Naples, 2003).

80. Alexios does not seem to have had any meaningful diplomatic contact with either Béla (d. 1196) or his successor, Emeric. Cf. D. Hintner, "Die Beziehung zwischen Ungarn und Byzanz im Spiegel der Register Papst Innozenz III (1198–1216)," in J. Dummer and J. Irscher (eds.), *Byzanz in der Europäischen Staatenwelt* (Berlin, 1983), pp. 157–60; Makk, *Árpáds and the Komnenoi*, p. 124.

81. See, for example, the complaints of the crusaders with regard to Béla's stance during the Third Crusade: *Crusade of Frederick Barbarossa*, pp. 58, 60–1, 79–80, 87,

esp. 79: "but he [Béla] was an indefatigable protector or helper to his son-in-law the Greek emperor, to the detriment of our men."

82. *Die Register Innocenz' III. 7. Pontifikatsjahr, 1204/05*, eds. O Hageneder and A. Sommerlechner (Vienna, 1997), no. 127.

83. The identification of the lands that consisted Margaret's dowry has been the subject of scholarly debate. Most have accepted that the dowry was located in the regions of Belgrade and Braničevo, Niš and its surrounding area, that is, the territories said to have been occupied by Béla in 1182–3 (cf. J. R. Sweeney, "Innocent III, Hungary, and the Bulgarian Coronation: A Study in Medieval Papal Diplomacy," *Church History* 42/3 [1973], pp. 330–2). Others, however, have located the dowry in large part north of the Danube (cf. L. Tàutu, "Le conflit entre Johanitsa Asen et Eméric roi de Hongrie (1202–1204): Contribution à l'étude du problème du second empire Valaque-Bulgare," in *Mélanges Eugène Tisserant*, III, (Vatican City, 1964), pp. 367–93. For Kalojan's conquests, see A. Madgearu, "Confrontations between Hungary, the Byzantine Empire and Bulgaria for the Belgrade-Vidin Border Region in the 9th–14th Centuries," *Transylvanian Review* 22/4 (2013), pp. 128–9.

84. Cf. Curta, *Southeastern Europe*, p. 382; Prinzing, "Das Papsttum," p. 148.

85. J. Schmitt, "Die Balkanpolitik der Arpaden in den Jahren 1180–1241," *Ungarn-Jahrbuch* 17 (1989), p. 32; Prinzing, "Das Papsttum," pp. 164–5.

86. On the Serbian succession, see L. Maksimovic, "Byzantinischen Herrscherideologie und die Regierungsmethoden im Falle Serbien. Ein Beitrag zum Verständnis des byzantinischen Commonwealth," in C. Scholtz and G. Makris (eds.), *ΠΟΛΥΤΑΚΤΕΥΣ ΝΟΥΣ. Miscellanea für Peter Schreiner zu seinem 60. Geburtstag* (Munich–Leipzig, 2000), pp. 180–1.

87. Maksimović, "Byzantinischen Herrscherideologie," p. 180.

88. Choniates, *Historia*, p. 531.

89. The divorce has been dated to 1201 or 1202 (Jireček, *Geschichte der Serben*, pp. 274–5; Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, p. 46). In Choniates's narrative it follows the events occurring in early 1201, and the historian specifically states that he is recording what occurred immediately afterwards (cf. Choniates, *Historia*, pp. 530–1; van Dieten, *Erdluterungen*, p. 127).

90. Choniates, *Historia*, pp. 531–2.

91. Choniates, *Historia*, p. 532.

92. Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, p. 46; Prinzing, "Das Papsttum," p. 164, note 94; J. C. Moore, *Pope Innocent III (1160/61–1216): To Root Up and to Plant* (Leiden–Boston, 2013), pp. 73–5.

93. Choniates, *Historia*, pp. 533–5.

94. The rebellions were effectively crushed by spring 1202. In the autumn of 1202 Innocent III received a now-lost letter by the Byzantine emperor Alexios, requesting that the pope prohibit the crusaders from attacking his empire on behalf of his nephew, the future Alexios IV. Cf. A. J. Andrea, *Contemporary Sources for the Fourth Crusade*, rev. ed. (Leiden–Boston, 2008), pp. 34–5.

## Chapter 2

# Discontinuity and Continuity of Byzantine Literary Tradition After the Crusaders' Capture of Constantinople

## The Case of "Original" Byzantine Romances

Dušan Popović

Although late Greek representatives of what we today primarily call narrative form, the novel, have not found their place on a genealogy tree of Greek literary history,<sup>1</sup> nevertheless these "wonderful love stories" (δηγήσεις ἐρωτικαὶ καὶ ξένας)—originating from the last centuries of Byzantium as a meeting point of Oriental, Hellenistic, and Romanesque narrative tradition—still represent continuators of the ancient cultural heritage and literary technique. At the same time, thanks to the new means of expression, these romances are freed from their ties to *mimesis* and ancient reproduction that imposes very narrow boundaries of creativity to the Byzantine writers in the works written in educated, archaizing language. Apart from representing most interesting testimony of multiple and versatile levels of literary reception, they, therefore, take up not an insignificant page in Medieval European literature.

Despite—or, perhaps, precisely thanks to—political and social crisis occurred after the Crusaders' capture of Constantinople in 1204, which in Greece, in the Balkans, and the Aegean region led to drastic territory decrease of the millennial empire in favor of the Frankish invaders, especially Frenchmen and Venetians, and Ottoman Turks in Asia Minor, the late Byzantine Hellenism experienced in such a period an extraordinary boom of studies, belle-lettres, figurative arts, and culture in general, which has made many to give it the honorary title of Renaissance.<sup>2</sup> A purely philological and classicistic dimension of this revival, whose distinguished protagonists were such writers as Maximos Planudes or Georgios Pachymeres, is well-known and well studied.<sup>3</sup> However, as similar cultural revivals had been cyclically marking the literary history of Byzantium, a phenomenon characteristic solely of the period of Palaeologoi, was the occurrence of alternative

literature,<sup>4</sup> which lived in anonymity and used colloquial language as means of expression.

This Medieval vernacular or demotic language is by all means the language of scribes and authors, and cannot be identified with the idiom really spoken at that time, although it is probably very close to it,<sup>5</sup> like all vernacular literary languages in the West were anyway.<sup>6</sup>

The most important characteristic of this, so to say, "new" literary language is, at least in the versification area, the almost exclusive use of political verse—πολιτικὸς στίχος, that is a fifteen-syllable verse, a verse with prosaic and narrative rhythm,<sup>7</sup> already been used in certain narrative works in the twelfth century, for example in the *Chronicle* and the novel of Konstantinos Manasses.<sup>8</sup>

As it is well-known, the literary use of vernacular Greek is also not an invention of last centuries of Byzantium. Experiments with demotic, more or less closely connected to literary circles of the court of Manuel Komnenos, appear, for example, in satirical poems of the so-called Ptochoprodromos and *Verses from the Prison* by Michael Glykas.<sup>9</sup> The so-called Byzantine epic, *Digenes Akritas*, whose existence in the written form was already possible in the twelfth century, was most likely composed in the same linguistic register.<sup>10</sup>

These twelfth-century experiments became systematic in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries for the entire sector of literary production that was related to fiction and that set itself a goal to entertain the audience. Precisely the romance genre, that is a group of thematically homogenous works, qualitatively and quantitatively relevant, in the domain of vernacular corpus, confirmed the completion of a process that led to the formation of a new, vernacular literature.<sup>11</sup>

As far as subject matter is concerned, these Medieval Greek romances, in accordance with what crystallized itself as a privileged plot—ὑπόθεσις—of fictional narrative since the Hellenistic period, represent stories of love and adventures, as explicitly emphasized by the titles given by the manuscript delivery; these titles specify the generic term διήγησις / ἀφήγησις—"story," "narrative"—with attributes ἐρωτικὴ καὶ ξένη—"marvelous," "romantic." Apart from the constant love theme, as something mutual with Late-Antique Greek novel—especially with the twelfth-century novel written in educated language—these romances also have the use of the same rhetoric means, as follows: insertion of opulent artistic descriptions—ἐκφράσεις—long rhetoric speeches, letters, monologues, and lamentations; despite their linguistic "openness," all these means show evidence of the persistence and continuity of certain narrative techniques and, more generally, of the strength of a typically Byzantine tradition of education and culture.<sup>12</sup> This relevant continuity of stylistic modes and forms is, however, followed by equally significant innovations in the area of thematic and narrative structure.<sup>13</sup>

There are only five romance texts to which the honorary title "original" could be attributed.<sup>14</sup> These are *Kallimachos and Chrysorrhoe*, *Velthandros and Chrysantza*, *Livistros and Rhodamne*, *Achilleid*, and the *Story of Troy*, or the *Byzantine Iliad*.<sup>15</sup> Within this category it is possible to distinguish, on the one hand, stories with Homeric subject, or title at least, and on the other hand, stories with completely fictional content. We will start from the prior, without implying chronological priority of the texts themselves, which is a problem on its own and we will deal with it here only incidentally.

While the *Byzantine Iliad*—which is essentially faithful to the Homeric subject and its inherent didactic moral—leaves little space for the love motif, and no space for magical and folklore elements,<sup>16</sup> the *Achilleid*, regardless of its Homeric title, closely follows the biographical-heroic scheme of the *Digenes Akritas*, that is the following three-part sequence:

Hero's prodigious birth, his endeavors—ἄθλα, and premature death; however, the love theme is strongly rooted in that scheme, thus the winning of the beauty becomes the main endeavor for Achilles, and her death the only cause of his death.

The new narrative formula, perfected during the last stage of development of novelistic genre in Greek language, is however manifested in its full within the trio *Kallimachos*, *Velthandros*, and *Livistros*, namely within the three works that, regardless of the specific differences and variations on stylistic and compositional level, show very related bearing structure and joint theme glossary. All of them have the following joint plot: A knight—the youngest son of a mighty ruler, or the ruler of a land himself—followed by his squires leaves the homeland in search of adventures, to prove his bravery, gain recognition deprived by his father, or find a maiden predestined to be his wife. His wanderings lead him to a mysterious castle, difficult to access, which has a threatening and generally unorthodox appearance, and where a princess resides. Getting the princess and falling in love with her conclude the first part of the narrative. Its second part implies the loss of a beautiful lady due to the activity of a rival or unforeseen event, which is followed by the hero's wandering during the quest after her and, ultimately, finding her, and the final happy end.

The castle motif is put in the center of the narrative axis, given that it represents the goal of the knight's journey, who is the only protagonist in the first part, and at the same time the beginning of a story of a love couple. This new, primarily narrative *topos* of a Medieval Greek romance, is described—in the best Byzantine rhetorical tradition—by using pompous *ekphraseis*, that is, glistening with gold, jewels, and mosaics, like its immediate visible model, the imperial palace in Constantinople; apart from this, it receives, explicitly or implicitly, an allegorical dimension. Fairytale-like dragon's castle in the *Kallimachos*, in the *Velthandros* that is Erotokastron, the residence of the

ruler Eros, where—in the presence of this God surrounded by his followers—the initiation of the hero ignorant of the laws of love is ritually performed, as a kind of a vision that suddenly disappears, that way depriving the structure of its population and returning it to the solitude that pertains to each mysterious castle. Finally, in the *Livistros*, the castle motif is doubled, given the fact that this is the most complex of all “original” romances, both for its frame-structure and its different metadiegetical levels.

Let us mention that castle topics—upon being structured by the romance with its magical and allegorical meaning, in the same way as the arduous path leading to it was structured—exceeds the limits of the genre and becomes independent, creating a new literary form.<sup>17</sup>

A short note of an anonymous scribe on the margin of a later manuscript of one of these romances—that the text in question contains a “love story,” *μῦθος ἔρωτος*—is an unambiguous testimony of the Byzantine readers being accustomed to stories of this kind. As soon as this audience—whose uninterrupted reading of ancient novel, directly or indirectly, is possible to follow from the fifth to the fourteenth century<sup>18</sup>—was moved to enjoy these pathetic love tales with happy ending by the Prodrimos’s and Evgenianos’s verses, that is, Makremvolites’s prose in the twelfth century, it apparently still found pleasure in the game of fiction.<sup>19</sup> Anyhow, new creations offered it both safety of the familiar, and the stimulus of something different. Within them, it was truly able to easily recognize the renewal and modification of the familiar basic topic—“love between two chosen beings overcomes every obstacle”—through a more accessible means of expression and, as to the sound of a well-known melody, to be lulled away in the rhythm of usual stylistic ornaments, like powerful and emphatic monologues, dialogues being started and ended using formulas as old as Homer, ecphrastic intermezzi, or weepy and sentimental love letters; this time, however, same stylistic ornaments are conveyed by the pleasant, discursive prose cadence of “political” verse. It was barely relevant that the heroine, against ancient rules, appeared in the scene only in the second part of the story, or that the hero, despite any Byzantine prudence, stubbornly strived not only to make endeavors—which, by the way, could have been easily avoided—but also to gladly meet them, or that the God of love himself was forcing him, by a whole series of rituals and ceremonies, to fall at the feet of a beautiful lady. After all, this new representation of love left more space for sensuality, awarding the hero—and his audience—with it much before the last chapter, while the thirst for adventures and passion for duels had already been introduced by arrogant Frankish knights, a century and a half before.

The Medieval West—after entering a new stage of contacts and competition with the New Rome due to Crusades, permanently establishing itself in the vast territories of the Eastern Empire, and gaining rule of the capital

itself from 1204 to 1261—in the period that followed the re-liberation of Constantinople, became the main partner of the Byzantium on the political and economic level, and the only one on the cultural level. The number and the quality of translations from Latin—which were performed masterfully, and luckily regarding the selection of texts, by such a scholar as Maximos Planudes<sup>20</sup>—show evidence of the existence of Western literary manuscripts in Constantinople and indicate a significant interest of educated readers, at least judging by the number of codices.<sup>21</sup> Apart from this, the presence of Western noble women—such as two Byzantine empresses, Yolanda of Montferrat and Anna of Savoy—with their suites in the capital regained from the Franks by Michael Palaeologos, must have led, at least in the court circles, to the expansion of topics and motives, if not the texts themselves, of the narrative chivalric literature in vernacular language originally written for female aristocratic audiences, as well as the allegorical and love poetry from the Medieval West for which a woman was both the addressee and the source of inspiration.<sup>22</sup>

The romance of the Palaeologoi period, the product of this contradictory era—characterized as much by the renewal of interest for classics, studied by the truly humanistic meticulousness and passion, as by the opening, although reluctant but indisputable, toward the culture of the Medieval *koine*—concisely embodies various turmoil and opposed tendencies of the same era. Being aware of the ancient techniques and narrative structures, anonymous romancers from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries used them masterfully fulfilling them however, at least partially, with new contents. The relevant literary innovations are the following:

- First, modification of classical three-part sequence, which implied love at first sight—separation, that is, *πάθη*—reunion and consummation of love, into the following doubled, two-part progression: hero’s departure in search of adventures—winning the maiden and enjoying with her—separation and *πάθη*—reunion.
- Second, breaking down a typical novelistic code of conduct, focused on maintaining the protagonists’ chastity until the very end of the romance.
- Third, revaluating heroic-adventurist and magical element; and finally, appearance of castle topic, with its symbolic dimension.

All these changes are very significant and can be explained only in view of the chivalric and allegorical literature of the West, taken over with a critical mind, and in an original and creative way adapted to the taste and expectations of the Byzantine audience.<sup>23</sup> For example, the presence of Eros’s image as a supreme judge over mortals—surrounded by the appropriate allegorical personifications in the form of courtiers—taken from courtly love allegory



and Byzantinized in its iconography, is explained through the prism of certain esthetic reception. Simultaneous absence of courtly concept of love and woman in the late Byzantine vernacular romance is explained in the same way.

However, "original" romances are courtly romances—in the sense that they are anchored in the cultural circles of Constantinopolitan court—most likely in respect of their own origin and purpose, as far as can be concluded by their self-presentation and representation.

As far as the chronology of the "original" vernacular Byzantine romances is concerned, nothing can be indicated as definite; they, as a whole, came to us within the sixteenth century manuscripts, and only hypothetically can be distributed into a sequence that usually starts with *Kallimachos*, that is, *Livistros*,<sup>24</sup> and ends with the *Story of Troy*. The only reliable affirmation—which can be made with regard to chronology and the sphere of origin, as well as diffusion of these texts—is that they represent typical products of that mixed culture and mixed society installed at the capital during the last two centuries of Byzantium's existence.

Finally, let us conclude with the following general remarks on the issue: As a testimony of a double chain of reception—perhaps not of great literary value, but of undoubted charm—and as products—simultaneously—of continuity and discontinuity, vernacular romances shed new light on creativity and vitality of a whole class of authors too hastily accused *en bloc* for barrenness, and praised solely for their role of guardians and renovators of classical tradition. However, the unquestionable credit they gained in our eyes, for preserving ancient heritage to turn it over to humanism that started to appear, was not the only one. Indeed, one of their most significant and most characteristic achievements was an attempt—unfortunately abruptly interrupted by the development of historic events—to break down the uncompromising isolation that the Byzantine literature intentionally closed itself into and to collect a part of cultural debt from the West that it had toward Byzantium, thus joining together the topics and motives assumed from the new chivalric "mythology"<sup>26</sup>—almost always successfully—with that autochthonous narrative heritage that had been enriching the mythopoetics of the Medieval Europe for centuries.

## NOTES

1. In a certain degree, such uncertainty regarding the place of the vernacular Byzantine romances predominates even today, with its roots extending to the nineteenth century, as analyzed by P. A. Agapitos, "Byzantine Literature and Greek Philologists in the Nineteenth Century," *Classica et Mediaevalia* 43 (1992), pp. 231–60.

2. Of numerous studies on this topic, it will suffice to mention only two here: A. Heisenberg, "Das Problem der Renaissance in Byzanz," *Historische Zeitschrift* 133 (1925), pp. 393–412, and I. Ševčenko, "The Palaeologan Renaissance," in W. Treadgold (ed.), *Renaissances before the Renaissance: Cultural Revival of Late Antiquity and Middle Ages* (Stanford, 1984), pp. 144–71.

3. Cf. H. Hunger, "Klassizistische Tendenzen in der byzantinischen Literatur des 14. Jahrhunderts," in *Actes du XIVe Congrès International des Études byzantines, Bucarest, 6–12 Septembre 1971*, I (Bucharest, 1976), pp. 134–51; C. N. Constantinidis, *Higher Education in Byzantium in the Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries (1204–ca.1310)* (Nicosia, 1982); N. Wilson, *Scholars of Byzantium* (Baltimore, 1983).

4. So P. Speck, "Weitere Überlegungen und Untersuchungen über die Ursprünge der byzantinischen Renaissance," *Varia*, II (Bonn, 1987), pp. 263–83.

5. M. Hinterberger, "Sprachliche Variationsformen in volkssprachlichen metrischen Werken der spätbyzantinischen und frühneugriechischen Zeit," in *Atti del III Congresso internazionale Neograeca Medii Aevi, Venezia 1991* (Venice, 1993), pp. 156–68.

6. E. Auerbach, *Literatursprache und Publikum in der lateinischen Spätantike und im Mittelalter* (Bern, 1958).

7. M. Jeffreys, "The Nature and Origins of the Political Verse," *DOP* 28 (1974), pp. 142–95; M. Lauxtermann, *The Spring of Rhythm: An Essay on the Political Verse and Other Byzantine Metres* (Vienna, 1999).

8. J. Koder, "Kontakion und politischer Vers," *JÖB* 33 (1983), pp. 45–56.

9. About these two, see more in H.-G. Beck, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Volksliteratur* (Munich, 1971), pp. 101–10.

10. R. Beaton, *The Medieval Greek Romance* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 27–48.

11. H.-G. Beck, *Der Lesekreis der byzantinischen "Volksliteratur" im licht der handschriftlichen Überlieferung* (Washington, D.C., 1975), pp. 47–67.

12. H. Hunger, "Un roman byzantin et son atmosphère: Callimaque et Chrysorrhôé," *TM* 3 (1968), pp. 405–22.

13. A. Agapitos, *Narrative Structure in the Byzantine Vernacular Romances: A Textual and Literary Study of Kallimachos, Belthandros and Libistros* (Munich, 1991).

14. In this chapter, the term "original" is used for those texts for which no immediate and well-known model could be established.

15. Editions: M. Pichard, *Le Roman de Callimaque et de Chrysorrhôé* (Paris, 1956) (for *Kallimachos*); E. Kriaras, *Βυζαντινὰ ἱστορικὰ μυθιστορήματα* (Athens, 1955), pp. 101–27 (for *Velthandros*); J. Lambert, *Libistros et Rhodamne* (Amsterdam, 1985) (for *Livistros*); D. C. Hesseling, *L'Achilleide byzantine* (Amsterdam, 1919), pp. 42–90 (for *Achilleid*); L. Nørgaard and O. Smith, *A Byzantine Iliad: The Text of Par. Suppl. Gr. 926* (Copenhagen, 1975) (for the *Story of Troy*).

16. R. Lavagnini, *I Fatti di Troia. L'Iliade bizantina del Cod. Paris. Suppl. Gr. 926* (Palermo, 1988), pp. 16ff.

17. Thus, the short poem written in the "vulgar" language, *The consolatory story of good and bad fortune* (Λόγος παρηγορητικός), as well as the extensive

didactical-encyclopaedic allegory from the end of the fourteenth century written in the learned language (with a lot of additions from the spoken language), *On chastity* (*Εἰς σωφροσύνην*), written by Theodore Meliteniotes, make use of the motif of voyage in search of the residence of some allegorical personality with the aim of changing the human condition: C. Cupane, "Il motivo del castello nella narrativa tardo-bizantina. Evoluzione di un'allegoria," *JÖB* 27 (1978), pp. 246–60.

18. H.-G. Beck, *Byzantinisches Erotikon* (Munich, 1986), pp. 85ff, 110–16, 157ff, 163–7.

19. H. Gärtner, "Charikleia in Byzanz," *Antike und Abendland* 15 (1969), pp. 47–69.

20. W. O. Schmitt, "Lateinische Literatur in Byzanz. Die Übersetzungen des Maximos Planudes und die moderne Forschung," *JÖB* 17 (1968), pp. 127–47.

21. M. Gigante, "La cultura latina a Bisanzio nel secolo XIII," *La parola del Passato* 82 (1962), pp. 39–49.

22. M. Grundmann, "Die Frauen und die Literatur im Mittelalter. Ein Beitrag zur Frage nach der Entstehung des Schrifttums in der Volkssprache," *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 26 (1936), pp. 129–161; M. G. Scholz, *Hören und Lesen. Studien zur primären Rezeption der Literatur im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden, 1980).

23. C. Cupane, "Byzantinisches Erotikon: Ansichten und Einsichten," *JÖB* 37 (1987), pp. 213–33.

24. P. A. Agapitos and O. L. Smith, *The Study of Medieval Greek Romance: A Reassessment of Recent Work* (Copenhagen, 1992), pp. 82ff.

25. E. Köhler, "Byzanz und die Literatur der Romania," in idem (ed.), *Grundriss der romanischen Literaturen des Mittelalters*, I (Heidelberg, 1971), pp. 396–407.

26. I. Seidel, *Byzanz im Spiegel der literarischen Entwicklung Frankreichs im XIII. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main, 1977).

## Chapter 3

# The Divided Empire

## Byzantium on the Eve of 1204

Radivoj Radić

Constantinople, the megalopolis on Bosphorus and the strongest fortress in the medieval world, was the city which resisted the attacks of numerous peoples—the Persians, Avars, Slavs, Arabs, Bulgarians, Russians, and the Pechenegs. Nonetheless, it succumbed to the enemy attacks twice in its thousand-year-long history: the first time in April 1204, when it was seized by the Crusaders of the Fourth Crusade, and the second time in May 1453, captured by the Ottomans. While the second fall happened after the heroic defense and two-month-long battles—under the circumstances when the enemy outnumbered the defenders twenty to one, and when the outcome of the battle depended largely on the cannons—the first fall of Constantinople to the Crusaders came about unexpectedly easily.<sup>1</sup>

A few decades after the ominous event in 1204, George Akropolites, historian of the Empire of Nicaea that was founded on the ruins of the Byzantine Empire, recorded that the largest and most glorious city of Constantinople had been, as the story went, seized by one or two soldiers that had climbed the city walls on a ladder connected to the mast of a big ship.<sup>2</sup> The great Byzantine historian from the fourteenth century, Nikephoros Gregoras, wrote from a distance of one and a half centuries that in 1204 the Byzantine Empire had been broken into many small pieces like a freight boat during the storm.<sup>3</sup> It should be stressed at this point that both cited metaphors by the Byzantine historians have not only their literary meaning but also in a way reflect the actual situation within the universal Empire at the very beginning of the thirteenth century.

How did it come about that the Crusaders seized relatively easily Constantinople considered to be almost impossible to penetrate? Without questioning the military skills, preparedness, courage, and weapons of the Crusade battalions, it was a fact that the Byzantine Empire in the eve of 1204 was in a



rather unfavorable situation, and was going through one of its biggest crises in its long history. It was the time when the Byzantine state was devastated by disturbances and turmoil, the events that usually herald the great historical changes and major disasters. Many internal turmoil and contradictions that had existed in the previous decades as well, although always hidden under the seemingly calm surface—at least hidden from the later historians with their limited view dependent on the available sources—appeared in their full scope and severity in the year 1204. Together with external pressure, these internal Byzantine tensions destroyed the Empire that had served as the model for political order and state stability and brought about total chaos and disorganization.<sup>4</sup>

Viewed in that light, the last years of the rule of Manuel I Komnenos (1143–1180) were in a way the period of calm before the storm, but the calm that accentuated the differences in the Byzantine society and created the environment favorable to strengthening of disintegrative forces in the Empire.<sup>5</sup> The apparent difference between the might of the Byzantine Empire that Manuel I Komnenos almost established in the glory of the old times, on the one hand, and the rapid decline and obvious powerlessness of the central government during the rule of his ancestors, on the other, prompted scholars to consider the death of the emperor in September 1180 as one of the turning points in Byzantine history: the end of a brilliant age and the beginning of great temptations for the Empire.<sup>6</sup>

It is interesting to note that already among the contemporaries of the emperor the opinion prevailed that the death of Manuel I was significant as the turning point after which many misfortunes befell the Byzantine Empire. Eustathius, the metropolitan of Thessalonica, wrote at the end of the twelfth century with depression and bitterness of a prophet: "It seems that it was to be our fate, as it pleased God, that with the fall of the emperor Manuel Komnenos there collapsed at the same time everything that was firm among the Greeks, and that when like the sun he left us, a great darkness descended upon us."<sup>7</sup> Despite the fact that these words resound as overly pathetic and are full of the standard oratory exaggeration, the metropolitan of Thessalonica made a very profound observation of the existing circumstances, expressing the view of many contemporaries.<sup>8</sup> It is important to stress that the metropolitan of Thessalonica did not live to witness the Fourth Crusade and the Latin seizing of Constantinople—this great scholar and important church leader passed away in 1195/1196.<sup>9</sup> Eustathius's judgment that Manuel's death represented a turning point in the history of the Empire was therefore not a consequence of his hindsight, which adds a specific weight to his statement.

Modern scholars who are specialists in the twelfth-century Byzantium are inclined to claim that the internal strength of the Komnenian dynasty, the energetic diplomacy and the wars of the three emperors—Alexios I

(1081–1118), John II (1118–1143), and Manuel I (1143–1180)—stabilized the borders of the Empire so that the Empire's strength at the moment of Manuel's death seemed quite impressive.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, the argument can be put forward that the structure of the Byzantine Empire began to dissolve much before the participants of the Fourth Crusade reached Constantinople. It will suffice to mention just a few facts: first and foremost, the "secession" of Bulgaria and Serbia starting from the mid-1180s; the rise of the independent lords in Cyprus, Peloponnese, and western Anatolia, also beginning in the 1180s; the founding of the Empire of Trebizond in Pontus, in April 1204. It is true, however, that this initial phase of disintegration was limited to the periphery of the Empire. The main thrust toward disintegration was executed by the Crusaders, both by the capture of Constantinople and their military conquests of Byzantine provinces that came about in the following years. These events dismembered the Byzantine Empire in its very core.<sup>11</sup>

We should also not fail to notice that the newly formed Bulgarian state (in 1185/1186), founded by the brothers Peter and Asen, rose abruptly in a very short time and slowly but steadily even became a rival to Byzantium in the struggle for dominance over southeastern Europe. The ambitions of the young Bulgarian state became evident in the 1190s, with many clashes along the Byzantine-Bulgarian borders, initiated mainly by the Bulgarians.<sup>12</sup> At the same time, these were the formative years for the other South Slavic neighbor of the Byzantine Empire—Serbia. The Byzantine victory over the Serbs at the Morava River probably in the late fall of 1190 could in certain sense be also called the Pyrrhic victory. It is a dominant opinion in the scholarship—although not unchallenged—that the events that followed the battle on the Morava, the marriage of Serbian prince Stephen Nemanjić with the Byzantine princess Eudocia, Angelina and Stephen's receiving the title of sebastokrator represented a recognition of Serbia's independence by Byzantium. Be that as it may, the position of Stephen, who became the ruler of Serbia in 1196, changed significantly, since as sebastokrator and the imperial son-in-law he was given a certain distinguished position within the Byzantine state hierarchy.<sup>13</sup>

The rise of Bulgaria and Serbia, combined with the conquests of the Hungarian king Béla III (1172–1196) that banished the Byzantines forever from the Danube,<sup>14</sup> the conquests by the Sultan of Rum in Asia Minor,<sup>15</sup> as well as with the disobedience by the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia,<sup>16</sup> thus inflicted significant losses to the Byzantine Empire, in both geopolitical and ideological sense, even before the Crusaders' capture of Constantinople in 1204.

In order to correctly understand the nature of the seeming contradiction pervading the Empire on the eve of 1204, the coexistence of the centripetal and centrifugal factors,<sup>17</sup> a note on methodology is in order: we are not talking about the artificial difference between the centralized Byzantine state



anchored in Constantinople and the "embryos" of more or less autonomous regional polities (in German: Territorialstaaten),<sup>18</sup> nor about the existence of the mutually exclusive tendencies: "imperial-universalist," on one hand, and the "national," on the other. We are talking about the contradiction of the very socio-political structure of the Byzantine Empire, its internal ambivalence, and dichotomy of its social forms. During the two last decades of the twelfth century the connections between the provinces and the capital became looser, and Constantinople's ability to control the provinces weakened, which fostered spread of the separatist aspirations.<sup>19</sup> Constantinople was gradually but steadily losing its former role of a center of the Christian universe in the decades preceding the fall of the capital in 1204.<sup>20</sup> During the entire period beginning with the short rule of Andronikos I Komnenos (1183–1185) and ending with the Crusaders' seizing Constantinople in 1204, the provinces more distant from the capital showed strong centrifugal aspirations. It was during Andronikos I's rule that the cities in Asia Minor became "disobedient" toward the new emperor, who tried with some rather radical measures to implement his policies. Niketas Choniates clearly explains the state of the eastern provinces of the Byzantine Empire with his dramatic and short sentence: "As a result (i.e., of Andronikos I's policies), the Asiatic cities were fraught with internal strife and wars."<sup>21</sup> It seems that the obvious lack of reaction by the capital to the events in the provinces was caused more by the central government weakness than by the conscious neglect. On the other hand, the consequences of the centrifugal aspirations that kept steadily spreading until encompassing almost the entire territory of the Empire on the eve of the Fourth Crusade, brought about the isolation of the capital, degrading that its rule over the large part of the Byzantine world to little more than nominal.

The condition in the Byzantine provinces before 1204 was best and most convincingly described in the testimonies given by Michael Choniates, older brother of the historian Niketas. We learn from his reports that the gap between the provinces and the capital was widening in the critical years that preceded the fall of the Byzantium, becoming unbridgeable in the case of the provinces in the continental Greece. The distance between the capital and the provinces underlined the complete disinterestedness of Constantinople in the troubles of the provincial population—the provinces thus became the fertile ground for anarchy and rebellion against the perceived oppression of the distant center. Reliable contemporary testimonies that have come down to us clearly describe the chaotic state in the provinces of the continental Greece. We have in mind in the first place the so-called "Υπομνηστικόν," the famous memorandum that Michael Choniates sent to Emperor Alexios III Angelos (1195–1203) in 1198.<sup>22</sup> This document describes frequent abuses by the local authorities who charged certain taxes several times, openly going against the imperial decrees that had completely forbidden the tax collectors

from accessing certain properties. Thanks to these abuses, Michael Choniates reported, there came the threat that the entire region around his metropolitan city of Athens would turn into the "Scythian desert."<sup>24</sup> In the vocabulary of the Byzantine authors, the phrase "Scythian desert," introduced by Herodotus, meant depopulated or desolated place, regardless of whether it was the result of the intrusions and plunders of the enemy armies or the gruesome consequence of the greedy and corrupt tax collectors and other fiscal officials.<sup>25</sup> Although Choniates's memorandum mentions only the abuses by the tax collectors in the region surrounding Athens, we can safely assume that the situation in other parts of the continental Greece was very similar.

Moreover, Michael Choniates describes the residents of Constantinople as spoiled, irresponsible, and indifferent to the evil that is eating the Empire and to the troubles that befell the inhabitants of the "provinces," burdened by the duties required by the capital.<sup>26</sup> The Byzantines that lived in the provinces of the Empire could not help but feel that the only connection between the capital and the provinces was epitomized in the presence of the tax officials who were being sent from Constantinople to fill up the state treasure with merciless financial measures. In a word, the Byzantine state with its decision-making center on the Bosphorus was viewed by most of the then Byzantine citizens as a completely unjust and corrupt institution.<sup>27</sup> And with Constantinople becoming more and more isolated, the preserved sources clearly testify the lack of the broader sense of Byzantine "patriotism" in the provinces, an expression of the provincial resentment toward the estranged capital.<sup>28</sup> Thus it is important to highlight the fact that during the crucial months for the survival of the Empire—between the summer of 1203 and April 1204—no assistance came to the capital from the provinces that watched with indifference the months-long agony of Constantinople.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, once relieved of the pressure from the capital, the lower strata of the Byzantine society managed to take advantage of the chaos that came about with the capture of Constantinople. They expressed their discontent by plundering the estates and other property of the institutions based in the capital—first and foremost of the Patriarchate and rich monasteries—scattered all over the provinces. Similarly, during the chaotic weeks of the spring 1204 the mobs in Constantinople were looting the court and the palaces of the aristocrats alongside the victorious Crusaders.<sup>30</sup>

The appearance of provincial "patriotism," which was also evident at the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, developed as a peculiar response to the power and glamor of Constantinople. This is particularly reflected in the circumstance that the central government very often neglected or ignored the voices from the provinces that sometimes turned into outcries related to the various abuses by the local authorities. Growing sense of regional solidarity, heightened by the negative attitude toward Constantinople, kept on spreading throughout the core of Byzantium's European hinterland and

resulted in open disobedience to the weakened center in the years leading to 1204.<sup>31</sup> Particularly vivid and insightful in this regard are the testimony by Niketas Choniates, the eyewitness of the Latin capture of Constantinople in 1204 who spent five days filled with terrifying uncertainty in the city plundered by the crusading knights. In the end, owing to his connections with the Venetians, he managed to pay his way out of Constantinople and to save himself and his family. In his *History* he described the dramatic encounter between the surviving refugees from Constantinople and the inhabitants from surrounding villages that underline the deep division within the Byzantine society. The learned historian writes about the contempt and hatred, as well as gloating with which the Thracian peasants received now miserable members of Byzantine aristocracy. The peasants from the village nearby Constantinople not only ridiculed the pitiful state of the refugees, but in their "insanity" they took it to mean that the former lords had become equal with them. They persevered in thinking that the poverty of the former well-off aristocrats was now equal to their poverty, and there were even those who were thanking God for being given the opportunity to get rich by buying cheaply the goods of their unfortunate fellow compatriots.<sup>32</sup> The social rift within Byzantine society between the rich and the poor thus became also a geopolitical phenomenon, juxtaposing the province against the center that was conceived as geopolitically distant even if being geographically very close.<sup>33</sup>

During the short reign of Andronikos I Komnenos (1183–5), the frequent movements against the emperor and his policies additionally underlined the gap between the provinces and the capital, irrevocably bringing about the animosity toward Constantinople among the local population. The widening gap and the feelings of discontent in the province were skillfully used by the ambitious provincial governors for their own interests. The weakness of the central government had therefore as one of its major consequences the appearance of regional lords whose power spread across the Byzantine world at the end of the twelfth and early years of the thirteenth century.<sup>34</sup> We should stress, however, that the scholars should stay clear of judging the strong centralized government as always positive and the processes of decentralization as a negative occurrence: the outdated discourse of centrifugal and centripetal forces could be balanced with the phenomenon of the so-called "regional centralism."<sup>35</sup> This phenomenon came about simultaneously with a general and evident lessening of the more general "patriotic spirit" in Byzantium, which Niketas Choniates mentions with bitterness, and evidenced the narrowing and the regionalization of the politics in the Byzantine Empire that, in their turn, gave an opportunity to the regional lords to renegade from the central power. Relying on the local population, the regional lords could raise the powerful support for opposing the central government in a measure much greater than in the previous decades.<sup>36</sup>

If we take a look at the map of the Byzantine Empire on the eve of 1204, we can easily perceive that there were in fact three main locations where the regional lords were coming from, each one very specific. The first was the border area with the "Second Bulgarian Empire," with the crucial events taking place in the 1190s and ending in the year 1202. In these territories, Ivanko, Dobromir Chrysos and John Spyridonakes went renegade while *protostrator* Manuel Kamytzes from there started his actions against the government in Constantinople. The second area was the continental central Greece, Peloponnese, and Thessaly, where the first signs of regional rebellions existed even before 1201—before the action by Manuel Kamytzes and Dobromir Chrysos that brought together almost all these territories in fight against the government in Constantinople. However, the real independence from Constantinople did not occur before 1201, so it can be argued that the determining factor for anti-Constantinopolitan movements in this region was incited by the actions of the lords in the areas bordering the "Second Bulgarian Empire." In the territories of continental Greece the following lords went renegade: Leon Sgouros, Senacherim, and, later, Petraliphas family. And finally, the western parts of the Asia Minor were the third area in which the rebellion of the regional lords was successful. This region was actually the first to rebel against the capital, as early as 1188, led by the local lord Theodore Mankaphas.<sup>37</sup>

An interesting recent reinterpretation of the Crusaders' capture of Constantinople in 1204 argues that significant and, for the Byzantines, tragic event in fact prolonged the life of the Byzantine Empire.<sup>38</sup> Although pronouncedly trying to challenge the dominant teleological course of studying the consequences of the events of 1204 by asserting that Constantinople would have been an easy prey for its more powerful Balkan neighbors had it not been captured by the Crusaders, and that the capital—purified from its sins through suffering<sup>39</sup>—regained its position as the accepted center of the Byzantine world only after it became clear to the provincials what the world without it would look like, the proponents of these provocative<sup>40</sup> theses come dangerously close to creating equally teleological opinions. Nevertheless, the discussion is an evidence of the constant need to reassess and revalue the Crusaders' capture of Constantinople in 1204 and the plethora of its consequences.

## NOTES

1. The literature on the Fourth Crusade and the capture of Constantinople is overwhelming—I shall limit myself to listing only those works I consider to be of most importance to the current topic: E. Bradford, *The Great Betrayal: Constantinople 1204*



(London, 1967), pp. 21ff.; *Istoriya Vizantii*, II (Moscow, 1967), pp. 331–346 (K. N. Juzbašjan); Ch. Brand, *Byzantium Confronts the West (1180–1204)* (Cambridge, Mass., 1968), pp. 232–69; *A History of Crusades*, ed. K. M. Setton, vol. II; *The Later Crusades, 1189–1311*, eds. R. L. Wolff and H. W. Hazard (2nd edition, London, 1969), pp. 153–85; D. E. Queller and S. J. Stratton, “A Century of Controversy on the Fourth Crusade,” *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* 6 (1969), pp. 233–77; D. E. Queller, Th. K. Compton, and D. A. Campbell, “The Fourth Crusade: The Neglected Majority,” *Speculum* 49 (1974), pp. 441–65; I. Dujčev, “Le grand tournoi historique de l’an 1204,” *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta* 16 (1975), pp. 63–8; D. E. Queller, *The Fourth Crusade: The Conquest of Constantinople, 1201–1204* (Leicester, 1978), pp. 1–154; J. Godfrey, *1204: The Unholy Crusade* (Oxford, 1980); Ch. M. Brand, “The Fourth Crusade: Some Recent Interpretations,” *Medievalia et humanistica* 12 (1984), pp. 33–45; A. E. Laiou, “Observations on the Results of the Fourth Crusade: Greeks and Latins in Port and Market,” *Medievalia et humanistica* 12 (1984), pp. 47–60; D. M. Nicol, *Byzantium and Venice: A study in Diplomatic and Cultural Relations* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 124–47; W. Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society*, (Stanford, 1997), pp. 656–66; J. Harris, *Byzantium and the Crusades* (London–New York, 2003); A. Laiou (ed.), *Urbs capta: La IV<sup>e</sup> croisade et ses conséquences* (Paris–London, 2005); *IV Krucjata. Historia—reperkusje—konsekwencje*, eds. Z. J. Kias and M. Salamon (Cracow, 2005), pp. 11–291; S. Rakova, *Četv<sup>rt</sup>rtij kr<sup>st</sup>onosen pohod v istoričeskata pamet na pravoslavnite slavyani* (Sofia, 2007); G. Constable, *Crusaders and Crusading in the Twelfth Century* (Farnham–Burlington, 2008), pp. 321–47.

2. *Georgii Acropolitae Opera*, I, eds. A. Heisenberg and P. Wirth (Stuttgart, 1978) p. 8.

3. *Nicephori Gregorae Byzantina Historia*, vol I, eds. L. Schopen and I. Bekker (Bon, 1829), p. 13.

4. R. Radić, “Oblasni gospodari u Vizantiji krajem XII i u prvim decenijama XIII veka,” *Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta* 24–25 (1986), p. 159.

5. A. Kazhdan, “Centrostremitel’nye i centrobeznyye sily v vizantijskom mire (1081–1261 gg.) (Centripetal and Centrifugal Forces in Byzantine World, 1081–1261),” *XVe Congres international des études byzantines, Rapports, I-1* (Athens, 1976); N. Oikonomidès, “La décomposition de l’empire byzantin à la veille de 1204 et les origines de l’empire de Nicée: A propos de la ‘Partitio Romaniae,’” *XVe Congres international des études byzantines, Rapports, I-1* (Athens, 1976), pp. 3–28. But see the reassessment of this period in a forthcoming volume: A. Simpson (ed.), *Byzantium, 1180–1204: “The sad quarter of a century”?* (Athens).

6. Radić, “Oblasni gospodari,” p. 159, and the preceding note.

7. *Eustazio di Tessalonica, La espugnazione di Tessalonica*, ed. S. Kyriakides (Palermo, 1961), p. 18. English translation: J. R. Melville Jones, *Eustathios of Thessaloniki: The Capture of Thessaloniki* (Canberra, 1988), p. 19.

8. P. Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143–1180* (Cambridge, 1993); V. Stanković, *Komnini u Carigradu (1057–1185). Evolucija jedne vladarske porodice* (Belgrade, 2006); V. Stanković, *Manojlo Komnin, vizantijski car (1143–1180)* (Belgrade, 2008).

9. *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, II, ed. A. P. Kazhdan (New York–Oxford, 1991), p. 754.

10. P. Magdalino, “The Medieval Empire (780–1204),” in C. Mango (ed.), *The Oxford History of Byzantium* (Oxford, 2002), p. 194.

11. S. W. Reinert, “Fragmentation (1204–1453),” in C. Mango (ed.), *The Oxford History of Byzantium*, pp. 249–50 (reprinted in S. W. Reinert, *Late Byzantine and Early Ottoman Studies*, Variorum Collected Studies Series [Farnham–Burlington, 2014, I]).

12. P. Petrov, *Vzstanovjavane na b’lgarskata d’ržava 1185–1197* (Sofia, 1985), pp. 25–350; I. Bozhilov and V. Gjuzev, *Istoriya na srednovekovna B’lgarija VII–XIV vek* (Sofia, 1999), pp. 421–48.

13. B. Ferjančić, “Stefan Nemanja u vizantijskoj politici druge polovine XII veka,” *Stefan Nemanja—Sveti Simeon Mirotočivi* (Belgrade, 2000), pp. 43–4.

14. F. Makk, *The Árpáds and the Comneni: Political Relations between Hungary and Byzantium in the 12th Century* (Budapest, 1989), pp. 107–124; P. Stephenson, *Byzantium’s Balkan Frontier: A Political Study of the Northern Balkans, 900–1204* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 275–315.

15. C. Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey: A General Survey of the Material and Spiritual Culture and History c. 1071–1330* (London, 1968), pp. 110–8; S. Vryonis, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century* (Berkeley–Los Angeles–London, 1971), pp. 126–33; A. G. C. Savvides, *Byzantium in the Near East: Its Relations with the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum in Asia Minor, the Armenians of Cilicia and the Mongols, A.D. c. 1192–1237* (Thessalonica, 1981), pp. 53–90.

16. *The Cilician Kingdom of Armenia*, ed. T. S. R. Boase (Edinburgh–London, 1978), pp. 15–22; *ODB*, I, p. 463; *ODB*, II, p. 1208.

17. Kazhdan, “Sily,” pp. 3–4.

18. Understood in that manner by J. Hoffmann, *Rudimente von Territorialstaaten im Byzantinischen Reich (1071–1210)* (Munich, 1974).

19. H. Ahrweiler, *L’idéologie politique de l’Empire byzantin* (Paris, 1975), pp. 65–66.

20. R. Radić, *Strah u poznoj Vizantiji, 1180–1453*, I (Belgrade, 2000), pp. 179–80.

21. *Nicetae Choniatae Historia*, ed. J. A. van Dieten, (Berlin–New York, 1975), p. 263. English translation: *O City of Byzantium, Annals of Niketas Choniates* by H. J. Magoulias (Detroit, 1984), p. 146. Cf. K. N. Juzbašjan, *Klassovaja bor’ba v Vizantii v 1180–1204 gg. i četvertyj krestovyyj pohod* (Erevan, 1957), p. 28; J.-C. Cheynet, “Philadelphie, un quart de siècle de dissidence, 1182–1206,” *Philadelphie et autres études* (Paris, 1984), pp. 39–54.

22. Ahrweiler, *L’idéologie politique*, pp. 89–90.

23. *Μιχαήλ Ακομινάτος τα Σωζόμενα*, ed. S. Lampros, I (Athens, 1879, reprinted Groningen, 1968), pp. 307–311; G. Stadtmüller, “Michael Choniates, Metropolit von Athen,” *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 33–2 (1934), pp. 282–305.

24. Michael Choniates, p. 307.

25. R. Radić, “Skitska pustinja u delima kasnovizantijskih pisaca,” *Radovi Filozofskog fakulteta u Banja Luci* 4 (2001), pp. 117–123 (reprinted in idem, *Vizantija i Srbija: plamen i odsjaji* [Belgrade, 2010], pp. 23–9).

26. Michael Choniates, pp. 307ff; *Michaelis Choniatae Epistulae*, ed. F. Kolovou (Berlin–New York, 2001), p. 69. Cf. Ahrweiler, *L'idéologie politique*, p. 92.
27. Ahrweiler, *L'idéologie politique*, pp. 100–1.
28. Choniates *Historia*, pp. 495–6. Cf. Ahrweiler, *L'idéologie politique*, pp. 99–100.
29. Radić, "Oblasni gospodari," p. 164.
30. Ahrweiler, *L'idéologie politique*, p. 100.
31. Radić, "Oblasni gospodari," p. 164; Ahrweiler, *L'idéologie politique*, pp. 66–7.
32. Choniates *Historia*, pp. 587–91, 593–4, 644–5. Cf. Ahrweiler, *L'idéologie politique*, p. 96; S. P. Karpov and P. I. Žavoronkov, *Kul'tura Vizantii. XIII—pervaja polovina XV v.* (Moscow, 1991), p. 18. On Choniates in general, see A. Simpson, *Niketas Choniates: A Historiographical Study* (Oxford, 2013).
33. Radić, *Strah*, p. 182.
34. Radić, "Oblasni gospodari," pp. 151–289; A. G. K. Savvides, *Βυζαντινά στασιαστικά και αυτονομαστικά κινήματα στα Δωδεκάνησα και στη Μικρά Ασία, 1189–c.1240 μ.Χ.* (Athens, 1987), pp. 173–341.
35. A. Kazhdan and G. Constable, *People and Power in Byzantium: An Introduction to Modern Byzantine Studies* (Washington, D. C., 1982), p. 15.
36. J.-Cl. Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestation à Byzance* (Paris, 1990), pp. 116–45, 427–58.
37. Radić, "Oblasni gospodari," pp. 176–222, 245–280. See also the previous note.
38. P. Schreiner, "Schein und Sein. Überlegungen zu den Ursachen des Untergangs des byzantinischen Reiches," *Historische Zeitschrift* 266 (1998), pp. 625–47.
39. Ahrweiler, *L'idéologie politique*, pp. 100–2.
40. Peter Schreiner, at the public lecture titled "Why did the Byzantine Empire fall?" that he gave at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade on February 10, 2004, said on several occasions that his thesis was provocative and aimed at inspiring the scholars to think in that direction.

## Chapter 4

# The Fate of the Palaiologan Aristocracy of Thessalonike after 1423

Nicholas Melvani

Throughout the Palaiologan period, the relations between Thessalonike and the Palaiologan aristocracy of Constantinople were complicated. After the reestablishment of Byzantine rule in Constantinople in 1261 the imperial government and the elites in the capital made attempts to control the Empire's second city in various ways, mainly by dispatching members of the imperial family and prominent military and administrative dignitaries to Thessalonike. However, this empire-imposed stratum faced several difficulties in dealing with the local landowning aristocracy, local commercial classes, as well as with the general population, and found it difficult to establish roots in local society.<sup>1</sup> This process was repeated more than once in successive waves during the two centuries that followed, including the final period of Byzantine rule in Thessalonike, that is, from 1403 to 1423. The events that marked this twenty-year period and those of the seven-year Venetian occupation are well known, particularly through contemporary narrative sources.<sup>2</sup> However, cross-referencing with archival sources in combination with the evidence of art and architecture help shed additional light on specific aspects of late Palaiologan society.

The return of Thessalonike to Byzantine hands in 1403 after a short Ottoman interlude was marked by the intense efforts of Constantinople to revitalize the economy of the city and its hinterland. The Emperor Manuel II was directly involved in the efforts to reorganize the area under Byzantine imperial control. Manuel installed his nephew John VII in Thessalonike, who reigned there until 1408 enjoying a certain degree of independence, but under strict surveillance of the imperial administration.<sup>3</sup> John was succeeded by the eight-year-old Andronikos Palaiologos, the third son of Manuel II. Manuel traveled to Thessalonike specifically for the occasion of Andronikos's proclamation as Despot of Thessalonike. Andronikos, who turned out to be the

city's last Byzantine ruler, did his best to implement the policies of Manuel Palaiologos in the empire's second city.<sup>4</sup>

The efforts of the last Palaiologan rulers are illustrated by the privileges that were extended to and the donations made to the monasteries of Mount Athos by Manuel II, John VII, and the Despot Andronikos Palaiologos in order to support their economic activities and encourage them to act as important players in the implementation of the empire's economic policy. This support consisted of tax exemptions, privileges, rights to revenues from various sources, as well as of plots of land from imperial lands. As the Ottoman threat grew during the 1410s and the early 1420s, Andronikos pursued a policy, which was neutral and maintained an equilibrium regarding the two main tendencies of the city's political life, that is, the faction that favored submission to the Ottomans and the one that preferred collaboration with the Venetians. In this policy he was greatly influenced by Manuel, but also by the popular metropolitan Symeon, with whom he preserved close ties and cooperated on several occasions.<sup>5</sup>

Both John VII and the Despot Andronikos reigned in Thessalonike surrounded by collaborators and counselors from the Constantinopolitan milieu. Among the aristocrats who accompanied John in 1403 was Demetrios Leontares, one of the most prominent men of the Empire attached to Manuel II Palaiologos, who assumed a leading role in the administration of the city—perhaps entrusted with the task of reporting to Manuel. After John's death Leontares remained in place as the regent and guardian of the under-aged Andronikos until ca. 1416–1417, a fact that ensured a smooth transition and the continuation of the same policies, in accordance with Manuel's wishes.<sup>6</sup> Apart from this Constantinopolitan aristocratic stratum, one of the most active elements of Thessalonican society was the local landowning class.<sup>7</sup> Among the prominent families of the city one finds the illustrious Tarchaneiotes lineage. The family's genealogy during this time has not been sufficiently delineated and the relations between the Constantinopolitan and Thessalonican branches are not clear, but various Tarchaneiotai had certainly roots in the city since the early Palaiologan period and belonged to the highest echelons of Thessalonican society, particularly thanks to their land-holdings. For example, Iakovos Tarchaneiotes bought an *adelphaton* from the monastery of Vatopedi in 1405: He donated his family estate in Chalkidike in exchange for a yearly pension in accordance with other similar arrangements known from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in the Athonite archives. In 1420 he acquired official confirmation of this arrangement with a document issued by the Despot Andronikos himself. Such a confirmation was probably deemed necessary at the time in view of the growing uncertainty caused by the imminent Ottoman expansion in the area.<sup>8</sup>

The practice of purchasing *adelphata* from Athonite monasteries was not a new chapter in the relations between Thessalonican landowners and Athos. In fact, lands that had been donated under similar circumstances during the third quarter of the fourteenth century continued to be in the hands of the monks, as they did actually survive the region's first Ottoman domination.<sup>9</sup> The best known example is that of the Deblitzenoi, a local landowning family who were still struggling to ensure some revenues from their former property until as late as 1419, at a time when their estates were under the control of Docheiariou monastery.<sup>10</sup>

Curiously, the monasteries of Thessalonike were excluded from this trend, although they had profited from similar donations during the past. Even the monastery most closely associated with the imperial family, that of Akapniou, did not enjoy any prosperity in the early fifteenth century; on the contrary it faced severe economic problems and declined rapidly.<sup>11</sup> It is clear that Akapniou, as well as most other Thessalonican establishments, were not considered as safe as the Athonite monasteries for the preservation of land property and that even the Palaiologoi were not interested in renewing their ties with their traditional monastic allies.

In 1423 it became apparent that it would be impossible to withstand the pressure of the Ottoman blockade and Andronikos, somewhat reluctantly, as implied by the sources, and under pressure from the pro-Venetian party of Thessalonike, finally ceded Thessalonike to the Venetians and fled to Mount Athos. From there he made arrangements for the submission of the monks to the Ottoman Sultan Murad II.<sup>12</sup> This political act was an additional confirmation to the Athonites to secure their land property and, by extension, to secure the property Andronikos himself and other landowners had entrusted to the monasteries. Since the Ottomans had already occupied the greatest part of Macedonia, where the monastic (i.e., former aristocratic) estates were situated, it was vital to ensure the favorable disposition of the Ottoman authorities; this disposition guaranteed the preservation of the estates and their revenues and by extension wealthy aristocrats who had retired to Athos by virtue of purchased *adelphata* could maintain access to their fortune. Later Andronikos fled to the Peloponnese (perhaps to his brother Theodore, Despot of Mistra) and then to Constantinople. He retired to the monastery of Pantokrator in the capital and remained there until his death in 1429.<sup>13</sup> Although nothing is known of his activity within the Constantinopolitan monastery, it is worth mentioning that he was under the direction of its abbot Makarios Makres, whom he probably knew from his stay in Thessalonike, and who was playing a leading role in the negotiations with Rome for the Union of the Churches.<sup>14</sup> Andronikos's father Manuel and John VIII, a supporter of the Union, were frequent visitors to the Pantokrator monastery.<sup>15</sup> Thus, as was so often the case in Late Byzantine politics, Andronikos appears

associated with various, even contrasting political trends: From pursuing neutrality toward the Ottomans and Venetians while he was in Thessalonike, to actively supporting submission to the Ottomans after handing the city over to the Venetians, and to associating himself with circles open to rapprochement with the Latins when he resided in Constantinople.

The various social groups active in Thessalonike at the time followed diverse courses. Military officials and dignitaries installed directly from Constantinople had begun to abandon the city even before 1423. Andronikos's counsellor Leontares is an indicative example: He was no longer active in the city since 1416–1417; during the next fifteen years he undertook important missions relating to state affairs, but none related to Thessalonike.<sup>16</sup> There is nothing to suggest that any member of his family was resident in Thessalonike, either before or after 1423. It is evident that Leontares did not establish any roots in the city; in fact, the sources imply that during his governance he was rather unpopular and was never integrated in local society.<sup>17</sup> Another official from the entourage of John VII, the *mesazon* Demetrios Chrysoloras, is last mentioned in Thessalonike in 1408, the year John VII died; in 1409 he appears as a member of the senate in Constantinople.<sup>18</sup>

Several prominent aristocratic lineages that had been active in fourteenth-century Macedonia and possessed property in Thessalonike also withdrew from the region, although it cannot be ascertained exactly when. Thus, the great landowning family of the Tzamlakones that had owned vast estates in central and eastern Macedonia, which they managed from Thessalonike in the early Palaiologan period, is documented almost exclusively in Constantinople by the fifteenth century.<sup>19</sup> Their land, on the contrary, was in the hands of the Athonites.<sup>20</sup> The same fate met the land of another great landowning family of fourteenth-century Macedonia, the Kaballarioi: Their estate at Antzista in eastern Macedonia passed over to the monasteries of Saint Panteleimon and Iviron in the late fourteenth century, whereas members of the family are documented only in Constantinople after that. It appears that these great families, that had started to decline after the fourteenth-century civil wars, had to give up their land in successive stages throughout the second half of the fourteenth century and that the final stage of this process took place around the time of the first Ottoman capture of Macedonia (ca. 1383–1387). However, these families did not return to the region after the restoration of Byzantine rule in Macedonia, since the economic and social circumstances were not favorable for their resurgence. They are absent from the events of the fifteenth century in Thessalonike and were alienated from the city's social structures.

Members of the administrative elite—including those employed by ecclesiastical authorities—also left Thessalonike for Constantinople eventually, although they stayed for a while after 1423. An ecclesiastical tax-collector known from his personal notebook, the so-called “Kugeas Notizbuch,” left

Thessalonike in 1425 and resettled in Constantinople where he received significant sources of revenues from the imperial administration itself.<sup>21</sup> Intellectuals, such as John Argyropoulos, abandoned their positions in Thessalonike around the same time and opted for the capital. Makarios Makres, a native of Thessalonike based in the monastery of Vatopedi on Mount Athos, also relocated to Constantinople around 1422 and became abbot of the imperial monastery of Pantokrator. Personages such as Makres and Argyropoulos played leading roles in the political developments and intellectual currents of Constantinople as allies of John VIII and were never again involved in the affairs of the Macedonian metropolis.<sup>22</sup>

Thus, the evidence suggests that even officials who tried to adjust to the Venetian administration were not able to survive the economic hardships of the time and were forced to seek their fortunes for a better life in the imperial capital. This agrees with the testimony of John Anagnostes: In his account of the capture of Thessalonike by the Ottomans in 1430, he mentions that many inhabitants, especially of high rank, had evacuated the city shortly before 1430.<sup>23</sup> It is perhaps during the 1420s that Thomas Kantakouzenos, brother-in-law of George Branković, fled from Thessalonike and took refuge in Serbia, where he pursued a successful career during the reign of the Serbian Despot.<sup>24</sup> In any case, prominent aristocrats as well as administrative and ecclesiastical officials are conspicuously absent from the account of the events in 1430 that led to the Ottoman capture.

Neither aristocrats such as Leontares, nor the bureaucrats and intellectuals that moved to Constantinople seem to have had any landholdings in the area of Thessalonike or Chalkidike. In contrast, local families more closely tied to the region and its land showed greater persistence in remaining in Thessalonike after 1423. The family of Rhadenos is an interesting example: Its members held important positions under the administration of Andronikos; Stephen Doukas Rhadenos was governor of Kassandra and, together with John Rhadenos and other officials, issued documents concerning the land of Athonite monasteries. It appears that John Rhadenos was active in Thessalonike under Venetian administration as well: In 1425 he is featured in a list of nobles that received a monthly stipend from Venice.<sup>25</sup> The same list mentions members of the Tarchaneiotēs family. Although their relationship to the Iakovos Tarchaneiotēs who had donated land to Vatopedi in 1405 is not clear, it is evident that the family appears connected to both the Palaiologan and the Venetian administrations in Thessalonike. Members of the Kabasilas and Laskaris families also collaborated with the Venetians and figure prominently in the sources between 1423 and 1430.<sup>26</sup> Thus, a portion of the local social groups active in Thessalonike under the last Palaiologoi readily adjusted to the new regime and continued to pursue active political lives.



Other aristocrats may have found shelter in Athonite monasteries, where they had donated lands during the previous years; the monastic community's submission to the Ottomans in 1423, in the presence of the former Despot Andronikos Palaiologos himself, was certainly a favorable circumstance for them to manage the estates they had donated, since the Ottomans were already masters of Chalkidike by then. The Iakovos Tarchaneiotes mentioned above could be one of them. As has been often remarked in similar cases, withdrawing to Ottoman Athos meant that the person in question could obtain the status of subject of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>27</sup> This offered greater freedom to exercise at least some control over family estates and their revenues—a resident of Venetian Thessalonike would certainly have been denied such an opportunity.

The latter pattern—that of refuge to Athos—is illustrated in the traces of aristocratic patronage that can be detected on Athos and this patronage can often be attributed to Thessalonican factors. The best example is the monastery of Vatopedi: According to an inscription on the door lintel above the entrance to the outer narthex of the main church, the Middle Byzantine marble lintel was repaired in 1426.<sup>28</sup> It is possible that the repair in question was related to the installation of the bronze doors still in place today (figure 4.1). According to a tradition, these doors were transported to Athos from the church of Saint Sophia in Thessalonike: Although this cannot be proved, close inspection of the doors reveals that they are made up of several plaques that were evidently removed from their original position in another church and reassembled at Vatopedi—hence the resulting inconsistencies in the rendering of the decorative patterns.<sup>29</sup> The most plausible attribution would be a Palaiologan church (as indicated by the double-headed eagles depicted) and nearby Thessalonike is a very possible place of origin—thus the legend seems to echo the facts, at least partially. One year later, in 1427 the belfry of the Vatopedi church was erected, according to another inscription on the belfry's north facade (figure 4.2).<sup>30</sup> All these construction works reflect the availability of funds during the years immediately following the surrender of Thessalonike to the Venetians, as well as the importation of grand-scale items made of metal from the city to the peninsula. These facts agree with the care landowning patrons had taken to endow the monasteries and secure their wealth in the years leading to 1423, as well as with the presence of Andronikos himself in Athos in 1423 and during at least one visit to the Community as early as 1416.<sup>31</sup>

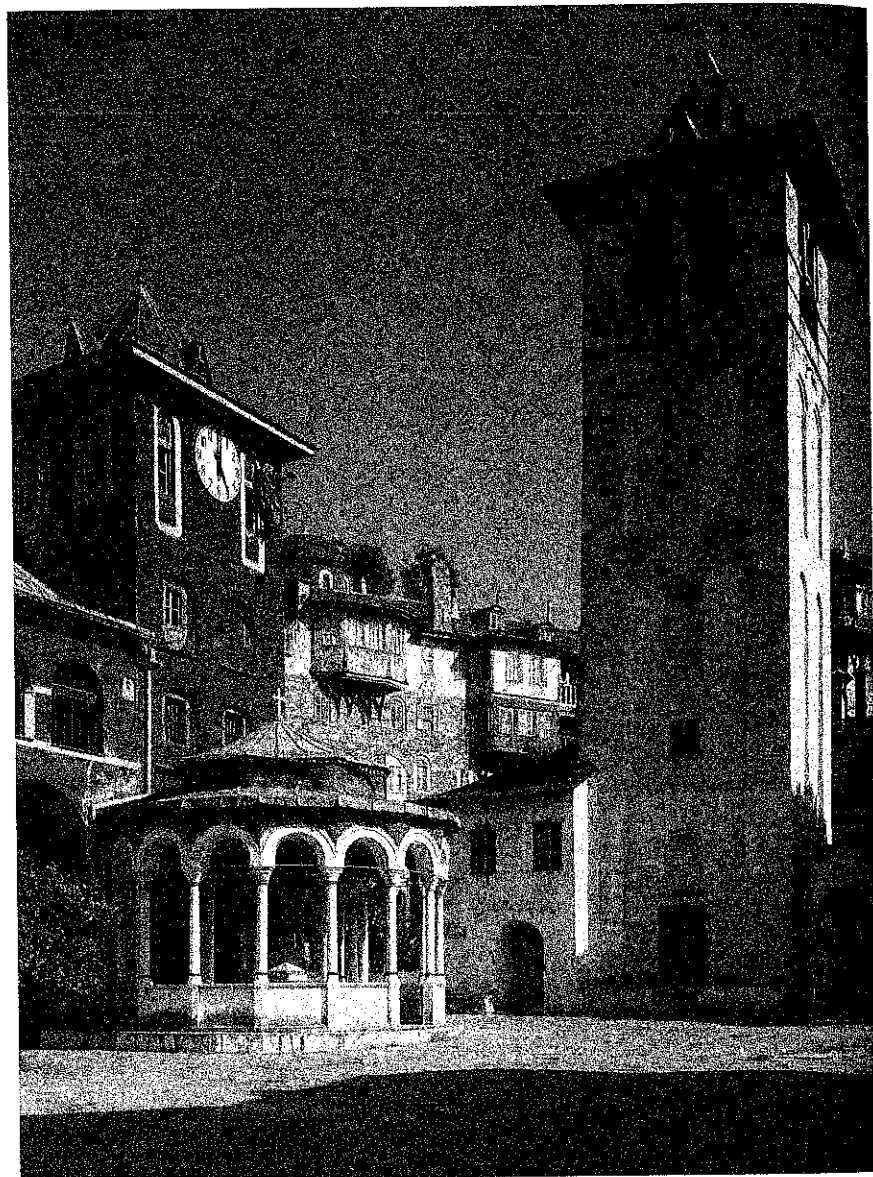
The testimony of icons and liturgical vessels that were transferred from Thessalonike to Athos is equally illuminating. Two late fourteenth-century or early fifteenth-century icons revetted in silver and gold now in Vatopedi were, according to a legend, brought from Saint Sophia in Thessalonike.<sup>32</sup> They are an icon of the Virgin Hodegetria and another one depicting the Hospitality of



Figure 4.1 Mount Athos, Vatopedi Monastery, main church entrance. Source: After *Ιερά Μεγίστη Μονή Βατοπαιδίου* (Mount Athos, 1998), figure 440.

Abraham (figure 4.3). Their style points to the late Palaiologan period and the iconography of the plaques attached to the revetment suggest Thessalonike as their place of origin; their large dimensions show that they must have belonged to the sanctuary barrier of a church. Thus, it is possible that they





**Figure 4.2** Mount Athos, Vatopedi Monastery: View of the main church and belfry from northwest. *Source:* After Ιερά Μεγίστη Μονή Βατοπαιδίου (Mount Athos, 1998), figure 103.

may have been removed from their original placement around the time when the churches of Thessalonike were seized in 1430 and subsequently offered to the Athonite monastery. Several other icons with silver or gold revetments, liturgical vessels made of precious metals, and other similar items now



**Figure 4.3** Mount Athos, Vatopedi Monastery: Reveted icon of the Hospitality of Abraham. *Source:* Mount Athos, Vatopedi Monastery: Reveted icon of the Hospitality of Abraham [after Ιερά Μεγίστη Μονή Βατοπαιδίου (Mount Athos, 1998), figure 439.

preserved in Athonite sacristies have been attributed to Thessalonican workshops of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries and it is conceivable that they may have been donated around the time of the Ottoman capture, or even earlier, that is, during the years immediately preceding or following the handover of Thessalonike to Venice.

The Despot Andronikos Palaiologos himself had donated a silver reveted icon of Saints Peter and Paul to Vatopedi probably in 1421<sup>33</sup>; the figures depicted on the revetment are characteristic military saints connected with Thessalonike, such as saints Demetrios and Nestor, and their presence on the icon's frame together with the central painted figures constitutes an intercession (*Deesis*) on behalf of the donor, a disposition also encountered in the pair of icons that allegedly came from Saint Sophia (see above). Andronikos also donated two luxurious gold-embroidered textiles bearing his monograms that were suspended as curtains at crucial focal points within the main church of Vatopedi, that is, at the sanctuary barrier and in the narthex.<sup>34</sup>

Tradition attributed to the same Despot the donation of several additional treasures, such as a crystal chalice and the so-called Cross of Constantine, reveted in gold (figure 4.4).<sup>35</sup> Although these legendary donations cannot be attributed with certainty to Andronikos, it is reasonable to assume that they at least originated from his entourage or, in any case, from the elite of Thessalonike. An icon with gold revetment in Dionysiou monastery, similar in form and style to the ones in Vatopedi, and a golden book cover in Iviron, which also displays affinities with the above-mentioned metalwork, are further testimonies of this channel from Thessalonike to Athos.<sup>36</sup> Andronikos's mother, the empress Helena, also donated a gilt cross to the monastery of Dionysiou. This work has also been assigned to a Thessalonican workshop and should be approached in the same context as the above-mentioned gifts.<sup>37</sup>

Several fourteenth- and fifteenth-century amulets, that is, objects associated with personal devotion, also attest to the presence of their owners on Athos (figure 4.5).<sup>38</sup> The sacristy of Vatopedi possesses a rich collection of Byzantine amulets, several of which date from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The amulets are made of precious metals and stones and are usually decorated with images of Christ, the Virgin, and saints, as well as with narrative scenes, especially the Crucifixion. The frequent occurrence of Saint Demetrios and other military saints on many of these amulets is an indication that their owners may have been members of the military aristocracy among whom the cult of such figures was very popular. Stylistic analysis has suggested that they are probably products of ateliers based in Constantinople or Thessalonike; the prominence of the image of Saint Demetrios permits attribution to the latter city in several cases. It is thus conceivable that members of the military elite of Thessalonike who were connected with Vatopedi brought them with them to the monastery and either donated them or bequeathed them after their deaths.

Transporting items made of precious metals to Athos was of paramount importance to wealthy owners who were anxious to secure their property during the 1410s and 1420s ahead of the Ottoman and Venetian dangers. The Ottomans had plundered Thessalonike during the first capture of the city in

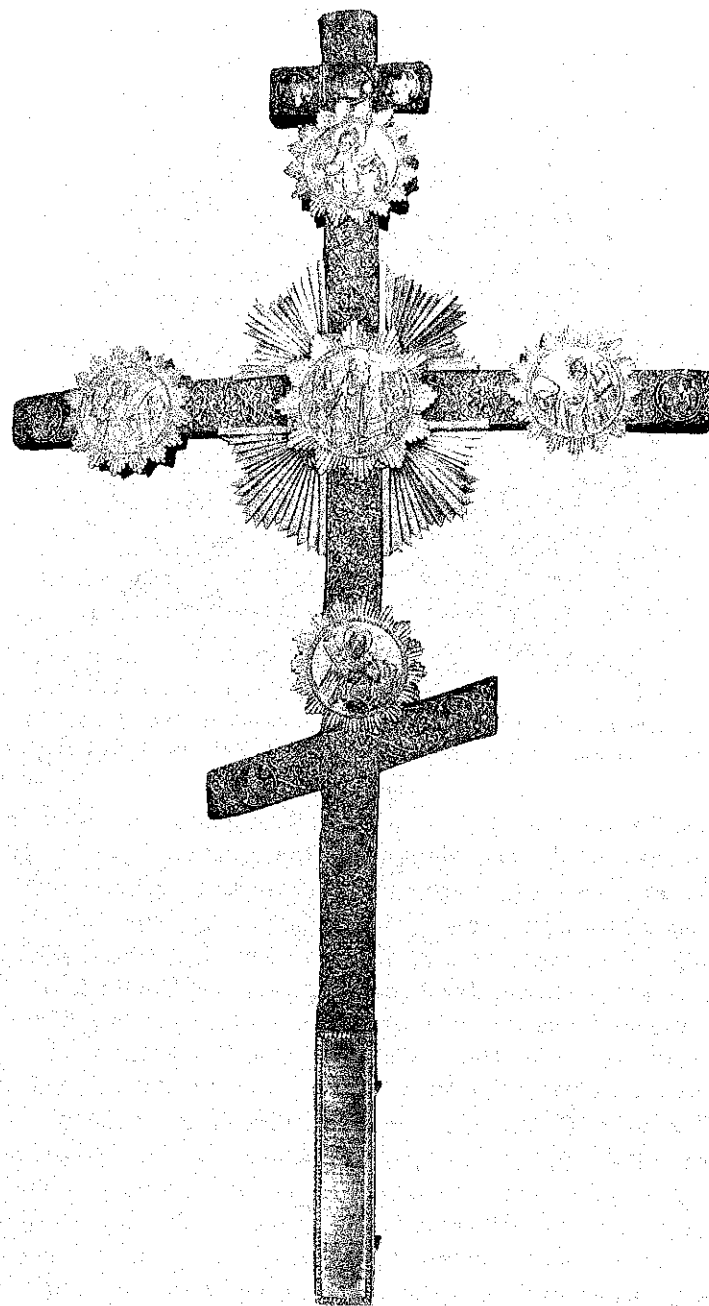


Figure 4.4 Mount Athos, Vatopedi monastery: reveted cross ("Cross of Constantine the Great"). Source: After Ι. Ταβλάκης and Δ. Λιάκος, "Ο Σταυρός ο λεγόμενος του Μεγάλου Κωνσταντίνου στη Μονή Βατοπεδίου," *Η Δεκάτη* 2 (2005–2006), figure 2.



Figure 4.5 Mount Athos, Vatopedi monastery: gold enamel depicting Saint Demetrios. Source: After *Ιερά Μεγίστη Μονή Βατοπαιδίου* (Mount Athos, 1998), figure 410.

1387, and the Venetians had an equally bad reputation when it came to such treasures since 1204.<sup>39</sup> Depositing gold, silver, and copper to the safe place that was Athos ensured the protection of these sacred objects.<sup>40</sup> Other owners of valuables, such as the author of the so-called Kugeas Notebook—who apparently did not possess any land in the region—had to pawn some of their belongings before leaving Thessalonike to resettle in Constantinople.<sup>41</sup>

To summarize, the late Palaiologan elite of Thessalonike went two different ways after 1423. Those who resettled in Constantinople have left no traces that they might have preserved contact with Thessalonike; instead, they shared the fate of the capital's elite in the subsequent decades. It is the local landowners that opted for forging close relations with the Athonite monasteries. Their peaceful submission to the Ottomans is of particular importance in evaluating the political situation in Thessalonike right before 1423. In fact, the different directions followed by the Thessalonican elite offer some insight into the factions prevalent in Thessalonike even before 1423 and their motivation: Those in favor of surrender to the Venetians were obviously vying for an upgraded role under the new regime, whereas those against it were afraid of it and took precautions for securing their estates. It appears that the

despot Andronikos Palaiologos had become an ally of the landowning class, despite his links with Constantinople. It is noteworthy that after the departure of Demetrios Leontares from Thessalonike in 1416 or 1417, Andronikos's collaborators appear to have been chiefly officials of local origin, such as the Rhadenoi and the Tarchaneiotai. However, when it became impossible to maintain the equilibrium he desired, he was forced to succumb to the pro-Venetian party, although he continued to actively support his allies, the landowning class.

It is probably this unusual alliance between local landowners and imperial administration that contributed to the perpetuation of Andronikos's memory in Athos. Vatopedi for example continued to honor Andronikos even through to the eighteenth century as a benefactor.<sup>42</sup> He was the last Byzantine ruler of Thessalonike and its region, and it was thanks to his protection and acts that the monasteries, together with some segments of the landowning aristocracy, managed to keep at least part of their former wealth. By the time of the city's surrender to the Ottomans in 1430 this class had been practically eliminated and did not manage to reemerge afterwards.<sup>43</sup> The process described above was actually accelerated during the first decades of Ottoman domination. By the middle of the fifteenth century, Vatopedi and some other monasteries had accumulated a significant percentage of the former land property of the Palaiologan aristocracy of Thessalonike.

## NOTES

1. See the general remarks in J. W. Barker, "Late Byzantine Thessalonike: A Second City's Challenges and Responses," *DOP* 57 (2003), pp. 5–33; N. Necipoğlu, "The Aristocracy in Late Byzantine Thessalonike: A Case Study of the City's Archontes (Late 14th and Early 15th Centuries)," *DOP* 57 (2003), pp. 133–51; D. Kyritses, *The Byzantine Aristocracy in the Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries* (PhD Diss., Harvard University, 1997), 117–134; Lj. Maksimović, *The Byzantine Provincial Administration under the Palaiologoi* (Amsterdam, 1988), 249–57.
2. A general survey of this period is given in N. Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins: Politics and Society in the Late Empire* (New York, 2009), pp. 56–83. See also D. Balfour, *Politico-Historical Works of Symeon Archbishop of Thessalonica (1416/17 to 1429)* (Vienna, 1979).
3. G. T. Dennis, "John VII Palaiologos: 'A Holy and Just Man,'" in A. Avramea (ed.), *Βυζάντιο, Κράτος και Κοινωνία* (Athens, 2001), pp. 205–17; S. Mešanović, *John VII Paleolog* (Belgrade, 1996).
4. A. Sideras, "Neue Quellen zum Leben des Despoten Andronikos Palaiologos," *BZ* 80 (1987), pp. 3–15; B. Ferjančić, "Despot Andronik Paleolog u Solunu," *Zbornik Filozofskog Fakulteta u Beogradu* 10 (1968), pp. 227–35; P. Schreiner, "Chronologische Untersuchungen zur Familie Kaiser Manuels II," *BZ* 63 (1970), pp. 285–99.

5. See, for example, documents issued in favor of Dionysiou monastery by Manuel and Andronikos: *Actes de Dionysiou*, ed. N. Oikonomides (Paris, 1968), no. 3/pp. 89–91, no. 16/pp. 101–9, no. 20/pp. 114–21. For Andronikos's relations with Symeon, see Balfour, *Works of Symeon*, pp. 195, 201–5, 232.
6. Johannes Chortasmenos, *Briefe, Gedichte und kleine Schriften. Einleitung, Regesten, Prosopographie, Text*, ed. H. Hunger (Vienna, 1969), p. 128.
7. Necipoğlu, "Aristocracy in Late Byzantine Thessalonike," pp. 56–63, 77–83.
8. Αρκάδιος Βατοπεδινός, "Αγιορειτικά Ανάλεκτα εκ του Αρχείου της Μονής Βατοπεδίου," *Γρηγόριος Παλαμάς* (1919), pp. 337–9.
9. For the adelphata, see M. Živojinović, "Adelfati u Vizantiji i srednjevekovnoj Srbiji," *ZRVI* 11 (1968), pp. 241–70; N. Oikonomides, "Monastères et moines lors de la conquête ottomane," *S ü dost Forschungen* 35 (1976), pp. 6–8.
10. N. Oikonomides, "The Properties of the Deblitzenoi in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries," in A. Laiou (ed.), *Charanis Studies* (Rutgers, 1980), pp. 176–98. For the family, see also Necipoğlu, "Aristocracy in Late Byzantine Thessalonike," pp. 79–80.
11. Th. Papazotos, "The Identification of the Church of 'Profitis Elias' in Thessaloniki," *DOP* 45 (1991), pp. 121–7; M. Rautman, "Ignatius of Smolensk and the Late Byzantine Monasteries of Thessaloniki," *REB* 49 (1991), pp. 151–2.
12. *Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken*, ed. P. Schreiner, vol. 1 (Vienna, 1975), p. 473; Balfour, *Works of Symeon*, p. 204.
13. Sideras, "Neue Quellen," pp. 12–5; Balfour, *Works of Symeon*, pp. 202–5.
14. *Macaire Makrès et la polémique contre l'Islam. Édition princeps de l'Éloge de Macaire Makrès et de ses deux oeuvres anti-islamiques, précédée d'une étude critique*, ed. A. Argyriou (Vatican, 1986), pp. 32–46; Balfour, *Works of Symeon*, p. 204; *Georgii Sphrantzae Chronicon*, ed. R. Maisano (Rome, 1990), p. 70.
15. J. W. Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus (1391–1425): A Study in Late Byzantine Statesmanship* (New Brunswick, 1969), p. 550. In 1448, John was interred within the Pantokrator monastery: I. Djurić, *Le crépuscule de Byzance* (Paris, 1996), pp. 383–4.
16. Barker, *Manuel II*, pp. 351–4, 357–8; Balfour, *Works of Symeon*, p. 128.
17. Balfour, *Works of Symeon*, pp. 122–3.
18. *The Letters of Manuel II Palaiologos: Text, Translation, and Notes*, ed. G. T. Dennis (Cambridge, Mass., 1977), pp. xxiv–v; S. Mešanović, "John VII Palaiologos in Thessalonica," *Βυζαντινός Δόμος* 8–9 (1995–1997), pp. 114–5.
19. For the family, see Γ. Θεοχαρίδης, *Οι Τζαμπλάκωνες: συμβολή εις την βυζαντινήν μακεδονικήν προσωπογραφίαν του ΙΔ' αιώνα* (Thessalonike, 1959). A Michael Tzamplakon in the service of the despot Andronikos in 1415 is the last member of the family attested in Thessalonike (Αρκάδιος Βατοπεδινός, "Αγιορειτικά Ανάλεκτα," p. 336).
20. See for example their large estate at Loroton near Kalamaria (in the Thessalonike region), which used to belong to George Tzamplakon and was acquired by a member of the Tarchaneiotes family before becoming the property of the Lavra: *Actes de Lavra*, ed. P. Lemerle, vol. 3 (Paris, 1979), no. 149/pp. 113–6.
21. S. Kugeas, "Notizbuch eines Beamten der Metropolis in Thessalonike aus dem Anfang des 15. Jahrhunderts," *BZ* 23 (1914), pp. 143–63; K.-P. Matschke and

- F. Tinnefeld, *Die Gesellschaft im späten Byzanz: Gruppen, Strukturen und Lebensformen* (Böhlau, 2001), pp. 59–62.
22. *Μακαρίου του Μακρή συγγράμματα*, ed. A. Argyriou (Thessalonike, 1996), pp. 18–21; E. Garin, "A proposito della biografia di G. Argiropoulo," *Rinascimento* 1 (1950), pp. 104–7; D. Bianconi, *Tessalonica nell'età dei Paleologi: le pratiche intellettuali nel riflesso della cultura scritta* (Paris, 2005), p. 237.
23. "τοὺς πρὸ μακρῶν ἐτῶν καὶ τοῦ συγκλεισμοῦ τὴν Θεσσαλονικὴν ἀπολιπόντας καὶ μετοικήσαντας," *Ιωάννου Αναγνώστου Διήγησις περὶ τῆς τελευταίας ἀλώσεως τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης. Μονωδία ἐπὶ τῇ ἀλώσει τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης*, ed. I. Tsaras (Thessalonike, 1958), p. 54. See also S. Vryonis Jr., "The Ottoman Conquest of Thessaloniki in 1430," in A. Bryer and H. Lowry (eds.), *Continuity and Change in Late Byzantine and Early Ottoman Society* (Birmingham, 1986), pp. 296–7.
24. B. Ferjančić had suggested that Kantakouzenos's departure may have taken place in 1430, as a consequence of the Ottoman conquest, but there is no trace of him in the city in the sources during the 1420s: B. Ferjančić, "Vizantinci u Srbiji prve polovine XV veka," *ZRVI* 26 (1987), pp. 193–7; D. M. Nicol, *The Byzantine family of Kantakouzenos (Cantacuzenus) ca. 1100–1460: A Genealogical and Prosopographical Study* (Cambridge, Mass., 1968), pp. 182–4. It is more likely that Thomas joined his sister Eirene—George's wife—in Smederevo as soon as George was proclaimed Despot in 1429. Nevertheless, the information provided by Anagnostes that Branković ransomed Serbian captives from Thessalonike is an important testimony that some Serbians, perhaps aristocrats with commercial interests and links with Venice, were also active in Venetian Thessalonike.
25. *Μνημεῖα Μακεδονικῆς ιστορίας*, ed. K. Mertzios (Thessalonike, 1947), p. 48; *Venice and Thessalonica, 1423–1430: The Venetian Documents*, ed. J. Melville-Jones (Padova, 2002), pp. 113–23; Necipoğlu, "Aristocracy in Late Byzantine Thessalonike," pp. 108–9, 297–8.
26. Ibid.
27. The example of the Serbian chieftain Radič is indicative: E. Zachariadou, "The worrisome wealth of the Celnik Radič," in C. J. Heywood and C. Imber (eds.), *Studies in Ottoman History in Honour of Professor V. L. Ménage* (Istanbul, 1994), pp. 383–97.
28. Th. Pazaras, *Τα βυζαντινά γλυπτά του καθολικού της μονής Βατοπεδίου* (Thessalonike, 2001), pp. 56–7; G. Millet, J. Pargoire, and L. Petit, *Recueil des Inscriptions chrétiennes du Mont Athos* (Paris, 1904), pp. 14–5.
29. Stavros Mamaloukos has expressed the view that the repaired lintel is connected with the installation of the doors: S. Mamaloukos, "The buildings of Vatopedi and their patrons," in A. Bryer and M. Cunningham (eds.), *Mount Athos and Byzantine Monasticism. Papers from the Twenty-Eighth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Birmingham, March 1994* (Aldershot, 1996), p. 117. For the doors and their decoration, see K. Loverdou-Tsigarida, "Βυζαντινή Μικροτεχνία," in *Ιερά Μεγίστη Μονή Βατοπαδίου* (Mount Athos, 1998), pp. 497–9.
30. Millet, Pargoire, Petit, *Recueil*, p. 36; P. Theocharides, "Οἱ βυζαντινοὶ περίβολοι τῶν μονῶν Βατοπεδίου καὶ Μεγίστης Λαύρας," in *Το Ἅγιον Ὄρος. Χθες-Σήμερα-Ἀύριο* (Thessalonike, 1996), pp. 110–1.



31. It is likely that Andronikos sojourned at Vatopedi and Dionysiou: *Actes de Dionysiou*, no. 16/p. 105; F. Dölger, *Byzantinische Diplomatie* (Ettal, 1956), p. 100.

32. E. N. Tsigaridas and K. Loverdou-Tsigarida, *Ιερά Μεγίστη Μονή Βατοπαιδίου. Βυζαντινές Εικόνες και Επενδύσεις* (Mount Athos, 2006), pp. 174–81, 363–86. The icons are now in the main church of the monastery, placed in *proskynetaria frames*.

33. An inscription on the revetment names Andronikos: Millet, Pargoire, and Petit, *Recueil*, p. 25; Tsigaridas and K. Loverdou-Tsigarida, *Μονή Βατοπαιδίου. Βυζαντινές Εικόνες και Επενδύσεις*, pp. 213–4, 350–67. A document in the archives of Vatopedi is probably connected with the donation: Αρκάδιος Βατοπεδινός, “Αγιορειτικά Ανάλεκτα,” p. 333.

34. Millet, Pargoire, and Petit, *Recueil*, p. 25. See also S. Paliompeēs, *Ιερά Μεγίστη Μονή Βατοπαιδίου. Περιηγητών αναμνήσεις* (Mount Athos, 2003), p. 44; N. Melvani, “Ο δεσπότης Θεσσαλονίκης Ανδρόνικος Παλαιολόγος και το Άγιον Όρος,” in K. Chrissochoides (ed.), *Το Άγιον Όρος στον 15ο και 16ο αιώνα* (Thessalonike, 2012), p. 421.

35. For the chalice, see I. Papangelos, “Η κρατητήρα του Βατοπεδίου,” in *15ο Συμπόσιο Βυζαντινής και Μεταβυζαντινής Αρχαιολογίας* (Athens, 1995), p. 56; *Θησαυροί του Αγίου Όρους* (Exhibition Catalogue, Museum of Byzantine Culture), G. Galavaris, N. Nikonmos, N. Oikonomides and E. Tsigaridas (eds.) (Thessalonike, 1997), p. 330; A. Mpalian, “Μεταβυζαντινή και άλλη μικροτεχνία,” in *Μονή Βατοπαιδίου. Περιηγητών αναμνήσεις*, pp. 501–3; J. Durand, “Innovations gothiques dans l’orfèvrerie Byzantine sous les Paléologues,” *DOP* 58 (2004), pp. 338–41. For the cross: K. Loverdou-Tsigarida, “Les œuvres d’arts mineurs comme expression des relations du Mont Athos avec l’aristocratie ecclésiastique et politique de Byzance,” in G. Galavaris (ed.), *Athos, La Sainte Montagne: Tradition et renouveau dans l’art* (Athens, 2007), p. 86; I. Tavlakis and D. Liakos, “Ο σταυρός ο λεγόμενος του Μεγάλου Κωνσταντίνου στη Μονή Βατοπεδίου,” *Η Δεκάτη* 2 (2005–2006), pp. 65–75; V. Chencova, “Pisec Nikolay Armiriot i Kr’st carya Konstantina: K istorii sviazey Vatopedskogo monastirya s Rossiyei v XVII veke [The writer Nikolay Armiriot and the Cross of Emperor Constantine: Towards History of the Relationship of the monastery of Vatopedi with Russia in the 17th century],” *Palaeoslavica* 19 (2011), pp. 60–109.

36. *Θησαυροί του Αγίου Όρους*, pp. 310–2.

37. *Θησαυροί του Αγίου Όρους*, pp. 314–5; D. Liakos, “Η δωροδοσία στις μονές του Αγίου Όρους τον 15ο και 16ο αιώνα. Το τεκμήριο της μεταλλοτεχνίας,” in Chrissochoides (ed.), *Το Άγιον Όρος στον 15ο και 16ο αιώνα*, pp. 314–5. The inscription on the cross mentions the donation of Helena Palaiologina and the stylistic features of the cross’s decoration are very close to those of the cross at Vatopedi.

38. G. Oikonomaki-Papadopoulou, B. Pitarakis, and K. Loverdou-Tsigarida, *Ιερά Μεγίστη Μονή Βατοπαιδίου. Εγκόλπια* (Mount Athos, 2000), pp. 128–33.

39. Balfour, *Works of Symeon*, p. 113; D. M. Nicol, *Byzantium and Venice* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 143–4.

40. Vessels and revetments made of precious metals were a safe way to divert wealth, especially when they were deposited in monasteries: see, e.g., J. Durand, “Precious-Metal Icon Revetments,” in *Byzantium, Faith and Power* (Exhibition

Catalogue, Metropolitan Museum of Art), ed. H. Evans (New York, 2003), pp. 244–5. During subsequent centuries, these precious items proved to be important assets for the monasteries, which often pawned them or melted them down: see, e.g., B. Radojković, “The Treasury,” in G. Subotić (ed.), *Hilandar Monastery* (Belgrade, 1998), pp. 340–1.

41. Kugeas, “Notizbuch,” p. 144: “ἔδόθη ἐνέχυρον σταυρὸς χρυσοῦς μετὰ μαργάρων καὶ ὑελίων ἀμεθυσίνων κοκαίτην καὶ ἐγκόλπιον μαλαγμάτινον ἀγιοκωνσταντινῶτον.” This description agrees with many items deposited in Athonite sacristies.

42. Melvani, “Ανδρόνικος Παλαιολόγος,” pp. 422–3.

43. See Vryonis, *Ottoman Conquest*, pp. 313–20 for the subsequent fate of Thessalonike.



## Chapter 5

# Donor Portraits in the State of Epirus

## *Aesthetics, Fashion, and Trends in the Late Byzantine Period*

Katerina Kontopanagou

The portraits of donors bear out the intellectual and social environment of their era. Actually, the limited textual evidence on Byzantine male and female aristocratic costumes are complemented by the artistic evidence and mostly derived from surviving portraits and representations in monumental and miniature painting.<sup>1</sup> In the region of Epirus the limited number of Byzantine donor representations provides invaluable information about the social status of the aristocracy,<sup>2</sup> the higher social strata in the State of Epirus. Furthermore the donor portraits can give us important information about the rulers' costumes and the aesthetics of the period of the Despotate. Especially the dated paintings of that period provide us with clear information about the garments and the social status of the donors. However, we possess limited information about the medieval provincial Byzantine society in Epirus and regarding the above theme only scarce evidence has been found.<sup>3</sup> The study of the secular costumes and the appearance of the donors in "periphery" provides insight into the remarkable aspects of the social and political ideology of every era, but has still to be undertaken in regard to the society in the late Byzantine Epirus.<sup>4</sup> In contrast, the observations in the field of provincial post Byzantine representations are much more numerous.<sup>5</sup>

There is not a single complete study of the donors' monumental representations in Epirus or a systematic examination of stylistic trends in this "periphery" of the Byzantine world. Sophia Kalopissi-Verti in her important research of dedicatory inscriptions and portraits of the thirteenth-century Byzantine monuments in other regions refers to the surviving donor presentations of this specific period in Epirus.<sup>6</sup> In addition to her study, a few recent articles offer a solid insight into the problem of the founders' wall paintings, including those of Panayotis Vocotopoulos for the Pantanassa of Philippiada<sup>7</sup> and

of Mirtali Acheimastou-Potamianou for the representation in Agia Paraskevi of Monodendri at Zagori.<sup>8</sup>

This study is an attempt to classify the basic trends and the current fashion of the regional Epirotic aristocracy<sup>9</sup> in the late Byzantine period through the examination of the founders' wall paintings. Our observations are based on the frescos of Kokkini Ekklesia (Vella church) in Voulgareli (1295/6),<sup>10</sup> and of Agia Paraskevi in Monodendri (1414), which are the only donors' portraits in the Byzantine mural art of Epirus that can be dated accurately because of the preserved donor inscription.

The archonts' stylistic choices reveal different cultural and, potentially political influences in each era. More illustrative in this respect is the wardrobe of the noble women,<sup>11</sup> because of the variety of accessible types and accessories through which they could express their self-awareness. The basic garments of Middle Byzantine ladies comprised dress and mantle, similarly to the earlier times. Since the early Byzantine period,<sup>12</sup> mantles were draped loosely around the upper part of the body. They are often shown worn over an undergarment with long sleeves. Dresses were ankle-length or had shorter capes reaching down to the knees. Mantles were an impressive and expensive item of the women's wardrobe in the middle and later Byzantium. According to iconographical evidence in Kastoria and in Cyprus, the fashionable outer garment of the twelfth century was a heavy ankle-length mantle that is secured at the front with a brooch.<sup>13</sup> From that period we have the adequate evidence about the aristocratic female costumes.<sup>14</sup> On the contrary, the evidence for the appearance of the female aristocratic costume in the thirteenth century is almost non-existent. The only two remaining dedicatory depictions are in Kokkini Ekklesia: Maria and Anna, the wife and the sister-in-law of the donor, offer a glimpse into the dominant fashion trends of that era. Fortunately, Anna's portrait is well preserved and from its detail analysis we can obtain valuable information. Her costume follows the fashion of the typical high-class female appearance of the late Byzantine period.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, her cape is secured at the front by a brooch, a detail that indicates the aristocratic nature of the costume. The color of her gown is light green and it is decorated with a diaper pattern in yellow. Over it she wears a heavy reddish-brown mantle with a dark brown collar that covers her shoulders. The general outfit follows the general canon of noble women's appearance, except in regard to women's headdresses, where it diverges from it: In the founder's portraits in Kokkini Ekklesia, we observe fabric headdresses in the shape of a trapezoid, a new variety that seems to belong to the provincial aristocracy.<sup>16</sup> The two ladies wear a cap beneath their wimple, which leaves only the face visible. This type is related with the traditional dress of the region of Pogoni.<sup>17</sup>

In another painting, the donor Theodoros Tzimiskes<sup>18</sup> wears a red caftan<sup>19</sup> with a diaper pattern in gold, buttoned down the front, but our conclusions

must remain limited and cautious on account of the bad state of the preservation of the frescos.<sup>20</sup> The donor holds an effigy of the church in his left hand.<sup>21</sup> The portrait of his brother Ioannis Tzimiskes,<sup>22</sup> preserved in very good condition,<sup>23</sup> reveals the prosperity of the archonts: His front-buttoned green caftan is patterned with medallions enclosing rosettes in gold. In general, both these representations show that the caftans were made of heavy, costly materials with an overall decoration of floral or geometrical patterns, signifying prosperity. Under the long narrow sleeves of the caftan, we can clearly distinguish the inner cloth embellished with pearls. One handkerchief is tucked in the belt.<sup>24</sup> Judging from the dedicatory representation in the Vella church, the powerful local archonts of Epirus<sup>25</sup> followed the trends and the aesthetic of Constantinople in choosing their clothing.<sup>26</sup>

The second case under examination is a representation of the founder and his family<sup>27</sup> in the catholicon of St. Paraskevi's monastery.<sup>28</sup> The dedicatory inscription<sup>29</sup> indicates that the donor was Michael Voevod (*βοεβόδας*) Therianos.<sup>30</sup> The wall painting on the north wall of the church provides interesting data of the social life in early-fifteenth-century Epirus and reveals the costumes, the coiffures, and, generally, the mentality, mores, and habits of the upper social strata in this area of the Byzantine world. This impressive painting depicts a clear hierarchical distinction among the family members.<sup>31</sup> First "the all-noblest" (*πανευγενέστατος*)<sup>32</sup> donor is depicted, followed by his son, his little daughter,<sup>33</sup> and "the most noble Theodora,"<sup>34</sup> who was his wife according to the inscriptions. The donor's title *πανευγενέστατος*, and the fact that he was *βοεβόδας*, show that he and his family belonged to the local aristocracy, and that he was beyond a doubt a very well-known man in the region with considerable financial means.<sup>35</sup> Theodora wears an ankle-length dress and a headdress that is draped around the upper part of the body and the head and fastened behind the head (figure 5.1). The fabric of the dress is rhomboid patterned. Narrow yellow borders decorate the ends of the sleeves and the edges of the dress. The sleeves are long, tight-fitting, and decorated with buttons, a common element of Byzantine aristocratic costumes.<sup>36</sup> It is worth noting that the decoration of the sleeves and the front of the dress with gold and pearl endings resembles also some Western models.<sup>37</sup> The decoration of the rich garments indicates the stylistic preferences of the nobles in the capital of Epirus.<sup>38</sup> Actually, it should be stressed that these garments became a part of the Byzantine aristocratic dress through French and Italian influences and had in many respects resembled those in Western Europe.<sup>39</sup> Fashionable trends from the West that found their way to the East from the fourteenth century onward are observable in the high-waisted clothes of Theodora and her daughter.<sup>40</sup> Western trends are also evident in the well-designed flower decoration of Michael's mantle.<sup>41</sup> That pattern especially resembles Florentine garments.<sup>42</sup> In addition, Italian influences are present in the bio-chrome



Figure 5.1 The donor's wife, Theodora, Agia Paraskevi in Monodendri, 1414.

smock of young Georgios: The pale-blue left one and the right red.<sup>43</sup> The biochrome costumes in Byzantine crafts also reveal influences from the West, such as those that the old man wears at the scene of the Entry into Jerusalem at Pantanassa church in Mistra.<sup>44</sup> Without a doubt these fabrics in various types characterize Italian paintings of the Trecento and Quattrocento.<sup>45</sup> Apart from their clothes, the coiffure of the father and the son point to the Western models as well.

It is much more difficult to identify the origins of Theodora's headdress: It is a combination of the fabric headdress that in part resembles a turban and is partly coming down freely around the neck and the upper part of the breast. This type seems to have been in use since the fourteenth century as we can see in the representation of the Despoina Anna in the church of the Holy Virgin in Dolna Kamenica (1323–1330).<sup>46</sup> These garments were very fashionable in the West for married women starting in the thirteenth century. In Byzantine art and therefore in Byzantine fashion that style appears more frequently from the beginning of the fourteenth century in the monuments of Northern Greece and the former Yugoslavia.<sup>47</sup> However it is very important to note that this fashion was also well-known in the capital: A simpler variant of this headdress is depicted at the Chora monastery in Constantinople.<sup>48</sup> That could suggest that the Western inspiration for Theodora's headdress could have reached the provinces in several variations and probably via Constantinople, revealing aristocratic female styles in Constantinople as well as in Epirus. Overall, the stylistic preferences of the Therianos family indicate the particular attitudes of their social class, which seem to prefer "Byzantinized" versions of fashion that arrived from the West.

The personal preferences of the donor, his or her education, interests, taste, and motivation in commissioning a work of art—together with the skill of the painter—all played a part in the number and the quality of the realistic details that found their place in the mural decoration of their foundations. The examination of the above cases of donors' representations points to the blend of topical preferences with the broader aesthetic trends that confirm the relationships with the metropolitan style in the late Byzantine period. Moreover, these representations provide the modern research with the codes for reconstructing the worldview and self-awareness, the values, ambitions, and ideology of the provincial aristocracy of the late Byzantine period in Epirus.

## NOTES

1. For the latter part of the Middle Byzantine period the main source of information on official costume is the *De cerimoniis aulae Byzantinae*, ed. J. J. Reiske (Bonn, 1829), English translation: Ann Moffatt and Maxene Tall, *Constantine*

*Porphyrogennetos, The Book of Ceremonies; with the Greek edition of the Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*, 2 vols. (Canberra, 2012). Unfortunately, there is nothing comparable preserved from the eleventh century. Important source is the mid-twelfth-century illuminated manuscript of the chronicle of John Skylitzes: M. Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of the Image: Byzantine Material Culture and Religious Iconography (11th–15th century)* (Brill–Leiden–Boston, 2003), pp. 52–3.

2. Regarding the “aristocratic” art see: R. Cormack, “Aristocratic Patronage of the Arts in the 11th and 12th century Byzantium,” in M. Angold (ed.), *The Byzantine Aristocracy IX to XIII Centuries* (Berkeley–Los Angeles–London, 1985), pp. 158–72.

3. In contrary, the post-Byzantine donors’ representations provide generous evidences especially for the last centuries of the Ottoman rule: D. Konstantios, “Χορηγία και Τέχνη στην Ήπειρο την περίοδο της ύστερης Τουρκοκρατίας,” *Δελτίον της Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας* [ΔΧΑΕ] 20 (1999), pp. 409–11.

4. Important evidences are provided at the founders’ wall-paintings in Kastoria: E. Drakopoulou, “Η Πόλη της Καστοριάς την Εποχή των Κομνηνών,” ΔΧΑΕ 14 (1987–88), pp. 307–14. Eadem, *Η Πόλη της Καστοριάς τη Βυζαντινή και Μεταβυζαντινή Εποχή (12ος–16ος αι.)*. Ιστορία–Τέχνη–Επιγραφές (Athens, 1997), pp. 32–3, 75–6, 111; M. Panagiotidi, “Η προσωπικότητα δύο αρχόντων της Καστοριάς και ο χαρακτήρας της πόλης στο δεύτερο μισό του 12ου αιώνα,” *Δώρον. Τιμητικός τόμος στον καθηγητή Νίκο Νικονάνο* (Thessalonica, 2006), pp. 157–67. Regarding the role and position of the noble women in the twelfth century, see: D. Mamagkakis, “Άννα Ραδινή: Η Γυναίκα της Επαρχιακής Αριστοκρατίας στο Βυζάντιο του 12ου αιώνα μέσα από Κτητορικές Παραστάσεις,” *Βυζαντινά Σύμμεκτα* 22 (2012), pp. 71–100; N. Patterson and Ševčenko, “The Representation of Donors and Holy Figures of Four Byzantine Icons,” ΔΧΑΕ 17 (1993–94), pp. 157–164. For the aristocracy of Kastoria in the fourteenth century, see: M. Paisidou, “Η Κτητορική Παράσταση και η Χρονολόγηση των Εξωτερικών Τοιχογραφιών του Αγίου Γεωργίου Ομορφοκλησιάς,” ΔΧΑΕ 24 (2003), pp. 223–30.

5. A. and J. Stylianou, *The Painted Churches of Cyprus: Treasures of Byzantine Art* (London 1985), pp. 77, 90–2, 425; S. Frigeio and Zeniou, “Οι Δωρητές στην Εκκλησία της Παναγίας Ποδιθού στη Γαλάτα και στο Λατινικό παρεκκλήσι του Καλοπαναγιώτη,” *Κυπριακαί Σπουδαί* 61 (1997), pp. 97–106; P. Kitromilides, “Η Ανωθυμία μιας επώνυμης γυναίκας στην Κύπρο του 18ου αιώνα,” ΔΧΑΕ 27 (2006), pp. 511–6.

6. S. Kalopissi-Verti, *Dedicatory Inscriptions and Donor Portraits in Thirteenth-Century Churches of Greece* (Vienna, 1992).

7. P. Vocotopoulos, “Η Κτητορική Τοιχογραφία στο Περίστωο της Παντάνασσας Φιλιππιάδας,” ΔΧΑΕ 29 (2008), pp. 73–80. For the painted inscriptions of the church, see: G. Velenis, “Τραπές Επιγραφές από το περίστωο του ναού της Παντάνασσας στη Φιλιππιάδα,” ΔΧΑΕ 29 (2008), pp. 81–6.

8. M. Acheimastou-Potamianou, “Η Κτητορική Παράσταση της Αγίας Παρασκευής στο Μονοδέντρι της Ηπείρου (1414),” ΔΧΑΕ 24 (2003), pp. 231–41. For the dedicatory inscription, see: Ch. Stavrakos, “The Donor Inscriptions of Panagia Molybdoskepastos and Saint Paraskevi of Vikos in Epirus,” *Proceedings of the*

*International Symposium, Dedicated to the Centennial of the Dr. Vassil Haralanov, Held in Shumen on September the 13th–15th, 2007* (Shumen, 2008) pp. 253–8.

9. On provincial aristocracy, see: J. C. Cheynet, “The Byzantine Aristocracy in the 10th–12th centuries,” in *The Byzantine Aristocracy and the Military Function* (Aldershot, 2006), pp. 21–4.

10. Kalopissi-Verti, *Dedicatory*, pp. 41–2, 54–5; D. Giannoulis, *Οι τοιχογραφίες των Βυζαντινών μνημείων της Άρτας κατά την περίοδο του Δεσποτάτου της Ηπείρου* (Ioannina, 2010), pp. 321–2; B. Papadopoulou, *Η Βυζαντινή Άρτα και τα Μνημεία της* (Athens, 2002), pp. 118–25. For the wall paintings of the church with the previous bibliography, see: Ch. Konstantinidi, “Η Θεοτόκος ως σκηνή του Μαρτυρίου με τις προσεικονίσεις και ο Μελισμός στην αψίδα της Κόκκινης Παναγίας στην Κόνιτσα,” ΔΧΑΕ 29 (2008), pp. 87–100.

11. Many researchers have studied the lifestyle of Byzantine women and attempted to define their role and status in Byzantine society as well as the pertaining ideology: A. Laiou, “The role of women in Byzantine society,” *JÖB* 31/1 (1981), pp. 233–60; L. Garland, “The life and the ideology of Byzantine women: A further note of conventions of behavior and social reality as reflected in eleventh and twelfth century historical sources,” *Byzantion* 58 (1988), pp. 361–93; eadem, *Byzantine Empresses: Women and Power in Byzantium A.D. 527–1204* (London–New York, 1999); B. Hill, *Imperial Women in Byzantium 1025–1204: Power, Patronage and Ideology* (New York, 1999); A. Laiou, “Women in the history of Byzantium” in I. Kalavrezou (ed.), *Byzantine Women and Their World* (Cambridge, Mass.–New Heaven–London, 2003), pp. 23–32; J. Cl. Cheynet, “Le rôle des femmes dans l’aristocratie d’après les sceaux” in *Mélanges V. Šandrovskaya* (St. Petersburg, 2004), pp. 30–49.

12. As illustrated in the representations of the ladies in the entourage of Theodora in San Vitale, Parani, *Reconstructing*, p. 73. For the appearance of Theodora and the fashion of the early Byzantine period, see: A. McClanan, *Representations of Early Byzantines Empresses: Image and Empire* (New York, 2002), pp. 121–98.

13. Two impressive luxurious mantles are worn by Anna, the wife of the founder of St. Nikolaos Kasnitze, and Anna Radini at Sts. Anargyroi in Kastoria. See: Drakopoulou, *Καστοριά*, pp. 32–3. Another type of mantle, shorter and lighter, is worn by a female figure in the manuscript Koutloumousiou 60 that is dated before 1169; Parani, *Reconstructing*, p. 74. We noticed yet another type of the mantle in Panagia Phorbiotissa in Asinou in Cyprus. The frescos date to 1105/6 and were repainted in the third quarter of the fourteenth century: Stylianou, *Painted Churches*, pp. 115–7, fig. 57.

14. The donor portraits in Kastoria corroborate the known evidences for the close connections of aristocracy of the “periphery” with the capital; Panagiotidi, *Καστοριά*, pp. 159–61.

15. Maria Acropolites, the wife of Constantine, is depicted in a similar outfit on a late-thirteenth-century icon of the Virgin Hodegetria: Ševčenko, *Donors*, p. 161, fig. 3.

16. The headdresses in the late Byzantine period can be divided into three broad groups: fabric headdresses, hats, and crowns. Fabric headdresses that consisted of a kerchief wrapped around the head appear to be the most common in the Middle and

the Late Byzantine periods, although the potential for variation in the appearance was enormous. During the Middle Byzantine period kerchiefs were wound around the head and the neck sometimes leaving the hair uncovered at the sides. Two of these variations are worn by Anna and St. Barbara in St. Nikolas Kasnitzes in Kastoria. Anna's kerchief resembles a turban and has one fringed end coming down her left shoulder. In contrast, the kerchief of the saint is wound around the head and does not hide the hair.

17. It is very interesting that in some cases starting with the twelfth century the headdresses bear the characteristics of the local tradition. In fact, the headdress of Anna Radini in Kastoria marks the beginning of a new era: A significant part of her headdress is actually the false dyed blonde hair, perhaps from lamb wool, that hangs down and frames her face. We should underline that in these regions the women in traditional clothes still use false hair. In Pogoni for instance on their wedding day the women put on false hair, usually dyed red; see, in general, M. Emmanuel, "Hairstyles and Headdresses of Empresses, Princesses and Ladies of the Aristocracy in Byzantium," *ΔΧΑΕ* 17 (1993–1994), pp. 113–20.

18. *Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit* 11 (Vienna, 1991), no. 27951.

19. From the thirteenth century the men, whether officials or aristocrats, are shown wearing the caftan-like garment either on its own or under a mantle. Parani, *Reconstructing*, p. 58 with examples. Judging by the representations from the twelfth century, the aristocratic male garments have shorter sleeves. The end of the sleeves and the borders are decorated with golden details. That outfit is attested with certainty in the portrait of John, son of Theodore Lemniotes in Kastoria, represented on the second fresco layer in the church Anargyroi in Kastoria (1180), P. Pelekanides and M. Chatzidakis, *Καστοριά*, p. 43, fig 20; Parani, *Reconstructing*, pp. 57–8.

20. Giannoulis, *Αρτα*, p. 321; Parani, *Reconstructing*, p. 341.

21. About the representations of church buildings on donors' portrait and in general, see: C. Marinković, "Church Patrons—a representation of mock-up or church? Treatise on architectural terminology related to representations in portraits of church patrons," *Zograf* 36 (2006), pp. 119–31; eadem, "Principles of Representations of the Founder's (kietor's) Architecture in Serbian Medieval and Byzantine Art" in M. Angar and C. Sode (eds.), *Serbia and Byzantium: Proceedings of the International Conference Held on 15 December 2008 at the University of Cologne* (Frankfurt, 2013), pp. 57–74.

22. *PLP* 11, no. 27952.

23. Giannoulis, *Αρτα*, p. 322.

24. As a rule, the caftans were worn with a belt; Parani, *Reconstructing*, p. 59.

25. Unfortunately there are no other examples of donor portraits from that period. Important information could be obtained from the paintings in the church of the Archangels in Kostaniani, but without a dedicatory representation. For the church and the frescos, see: A. Babuin, "La decorazione ad affresco della chiesa degli Archangeli a Kostaniani in Epiro," A. Rigo, A. Babuin, and M. Trizio (eds.), *Vie per Bisanzio, Atti del VII Congresso nazionale dell'Associazione Italiana di Studi Bizantini* (Venezia, 25–28 novembre 2009) (Bari, 2013), pp. 395–414.

26. This phenomenon has been identified in other regions; see Panagiotidi, *Καστοριά*, p. 160; Stylianou, *Painted Churches*, p. 117.

27. The representation of donor and his family is situated at the north wall; Acheimastou-Potamianou, *Κτιτορική Παράσταση*, pp. 231–42; M. Acheimastou-Potamianou, "Οικοτογραφίες της μονής Βίκου στο Μονοδέντρι της Ηπείρου," *Όγδοο Συμπόσιο βυζαντινής και μεταβυζαντινής αρχαιολογίας και τέχνης*, (Athens, 1988), pp. 29–30.

28. The frescoes survive in good condition; see P. Vocotopoulos, "Βυζαντινά και Μεσσαιωνικά Μνημεία Ηπείρου, Δυτικό Ζαγόρι," *Αρχαιολογικόν Δελτίον* 21 (1966), pp. 304–5; A. Tourta, *Οι Ναοί του Αγίου Νικολάου στη Βίτσα και του Αγίου Μηνά στο Μονοδέντρι* (Athens, 1991), p. 29.

29. Stavrakos, *Donor Inscriptions*, pp. 253–4.

30. *PLP* 4 (Vienna, 1980), no. 7698; Stavrakos, *Donor Inscriptions*, p. 254; Acheimastou-Potamianou, *Κτιτορική Παράσταση*, pp. 235–6. For the honorable titles in the State of Epirus, see: A. Stavridou-Zafra, "Η Κοινωνία της Ηπείρου στο κράτος του Θ. Δούκα" in E. Chrysos (ed.), *Πρακτικά Διεθνούς Συμποσίου για το Δεσποτάτο της Ηπείρου, Αρτα 1990* (Arta, 1992), pp. 313–33.

31. The hierarchical prioritizing is used in donor depictions to indicate the significance and the political roles of the figures; D. Vojvodić, "The Image of Secular and Spiritual authorities in Serbian Medieval Art," *Zbornik Matice Srpske* 38 (2010), pp. 35–78.

32. In the donor inscription he is mentioned as "εὐγενέστατος," whereas in the accompanying inscriptions on the fresco painting he is designated as "πανευγενέστατος"; Stavrakos, *Donor Inscriptions*, p. 255.

33. The name of his daughter does not survive but it must be Paraskevi because her father dedicates the church to the homonymous saint: *πρὸς σωτηρίαν τῆς θυγατρὸς αὐτοῦ, ἧτις καὶ ἐμόνασεν τὸ πρῶτον ἐνταῦθα*, Acheimastou-Potamianou, *Κτιτορική Παράσταση*, p. 234 n. 17.

34. M. Acheimastou-Potamianou has read the title "εὐγενεστάτη." Ch. Stavrakos notes that because the initial letters of the first line have been destroyed, it is also possible that the title is "πανευγενεστάτη"; Stavrakos, *Donor Inscriptions*, p. 255.

35. About the significance of the title "πανευγενέστατος," the differentiation between the donor inscription and the family name "Therianos," see: Stavrakos, *Donor Inscriptions*, pp. 255–6.

36. Acheimastou-Potamianou, *Κτιτορική παράσταση*, p. 239 n. 42. Maria Angelina Doukaina Paleologina, as Potamianou had observed, wears a robe full of buttons in a leaf of the diptych of Meteora. For this diptych see M. Chatzidakis and D. Sofianos, *Το Μεγάλο Μετέωρο. Ιστορία και Τέχνη* (Athens, 1990), p. 55.

37. This is common in Venetian paintings of the Trecento: see R. Pallucchini, *La Pittura Veneziana del Trecento* (Venice–Rome, 1964), pp. 122, 134.

38. The golden accessories on the fabrics and the rich decorations of the women in donor portraits illustrate the high social class. Indicatively, see the founder's presentation in the church of the Transfiguration of Christ in Crete (Rethimno), dated to the first quarter of the fourteenth century. The mantle of the lady, who according to the inscription is called Anitza, is decorated with two square-shaped golden foils;



I. Spatharakis, *Βυζαντινές Τοιχογραφίες Νομού Ρεθύμνου* (Rethimno, 1999), p. 106, fig. 126.

39. It is well-known that there are many Western borrowings in architecture, sculpture, and paintings in Epirus in the thirteenth century: P. Vocotopoulos, "Η τέχνη στην Ήπειρο κατά τον 13ο αιώνα," in *Η Βυζαντινή τέχνη μετά την Τέταρτη Σταυροφορία. Η τέταρτη Σταυροφορία και οι επιπτώσεις της. Διεθνές Συνέδριο, Ακαδημία Αθηνών 9–12 Μαρτίου 2004* (Athens 2007), pp. 47–62. Similar influences are present in Cretan paintings of the thirteenth century, and icono-graphical details in many scenes and depiction of specific types of clothing resemble Western models: V. Vassilaki, "Η Κρήτη υπό βενετική κυριαρχία. Η μαρτυρία των μνημείων του 13ου αιώνα" in *Η Βυζαντινή τέχνη τέχνη μετά την Τέταρτη Σταυροφορία. Η τέταρτη Σταυροφορία και οι επιπτώσεις της. Διεθνές Συνέδριο, Ακαδημία Αθηνών 9–12 Μαρτίου 2004* (Athens 2007), pp. 31–46.

40. The same kind of clothing with similar decoration and an appearance that obviously has Italian origin is worn by the young donors in an early-fifteenth-century portable icon from the island of Corfu; see P. Vocotopoulos, *Εικόνες της Κέρκυρας* (Athens, 1990), no. 5, figs. 7, 87; Acheimastou-Potamianou, *Κυριοτική Παράσταση*, pp. 239–240; Vassilaki, *Η Κρήτη υπό βενετική κυριαρχία*, pp. 37–9. For similar examples in the West, see: Palluchini, *La Pittura Veneziana*, figs. 23, 41, 133; P. Santucci, *La Pittura del Quattrocento* (Torino, 1992), pp. 120, 125.

41. Acheimastou-Potamianou, *Κυριοτική Επιγραφή*, pp. 237–8, with many examples.

42. A variety of similar decorations are identified in the paintings of Michelino da Besozzo, Gentile Fabriano (Santucci, *La Pittura*, pp. 66, 69); Simone Martini and E. Lunghi, *The Basilica of St. Francis at Assisi: The Frescoes by Giotto, His Precursors and Followers* (London, 1996), p. 154; P. Ioannides, *Masaccio and Masolino: A Complete Catalogue* (London, 1993), p. 98, plate 66.

43. Acheimastou-Potamianou, *Κυριοτική παράσταση*, p. 239.

44. St. Sinos, "Μονή Παντάνασσας," in St. Sinos (ed.), *Τα Μνημεία του Μυστρά. Το έργο της Επιτροπής Αναστήλωσης Μνημείων Μυστρά*, (Athens, 2009), p. 204, fig. 21.

45. The different colors for the same part of the clothing are used in early Italian painting. The colors are depicted in horizontal or vertical arrangement; M. Boskovits, *Early Italian Painting 1290–1470* (Milano, 1990), p. 163. There is a remarkable variety in the bio-chrome fabrics in the paintings of Simone Martini and Pietro Lorenzetti: Lunghi and Giotto, pp. 142, 168; Palluchini, *La Pittura*, fig. 306; A.-M. Maetzelke and C. Bertelli (eds.), *Piero della Francesca: The Legend of the True Cross in the Church of San Francesco in Arezzo* (Milano, 2001), p. 109.

46. D. Piguet-Panayotova, *Recherches sur la peinture en Bulgarie du bas moyen âge* (Paris, 1987), pp. 228–32.

47. Emanuel, "Hairstyles and headdresses," p. 117.

48. S. Der Nersessian, "Program and Iconography of the Frescoes of the Parecclesion" in P. Underwood (ed.), *The Kariye Djami 4* (Princeton, 1975), pp. 305–49.

## Chapter 6

# Monastic Foundation Legends in Epirus

Christos Stavrakos

My most recent investigations of the Byzantine and post-Byzantine monuments of Epirus brought me to the monastery of the Dormition of the Virgin (Theotokos Molybdoskepastos) close to the Greek–Albanian borders on the plain of Konitsa, in what is today the Greek part of the former region of Pogoniane.

The monastery is located in an area of exceptional natural beauty, twenty-two kilometers west of the modern town of Konitsa, fifty kilometers northwest of Ioannina on the eastern foothills of the mountain Douskon<sup>1</sup> (Nemerçka mountain range, Merope today), only 400 meters from the Greek–Albanian border. The *katholikon* is unique both from the architectural perspective and because its decorative wall paintings are thus far unpublished.<sup>2</sup> It is a unique monument not only for the region of Pogoniane, but for Epirus as well. According to the donor inscription (early sixteenth century), this monument erected in an area so remote and neglected by the administration headquarters of the Byzantine State, that is, Constantinople, became during the seventh century an object of imperial interest. The interest was so great that the emperor Constantine IV himself chose to erect a monastery here.

To date, no other archaeological findings or any other testimonies have taken note or confirmed this interpretation of this inscription. However, it is worth noting that at the time the truthfulness of the story that emphasized the connection of this region with Constantinople was taken for granted and a portrait of the emperor as the founder of the monastery was painted on the outer west wall of the *katholikon*. This example was followed by other monasteries of Epirus and thus became a tradition attributed to more monasteries during the reign of this particular emperor. In the eighteenth century appears the *Χρονικὸν τῆς Παγωνιανῆς*, the first written testimony of the legend in its complete form, similar but much more detailed narrative in comparison

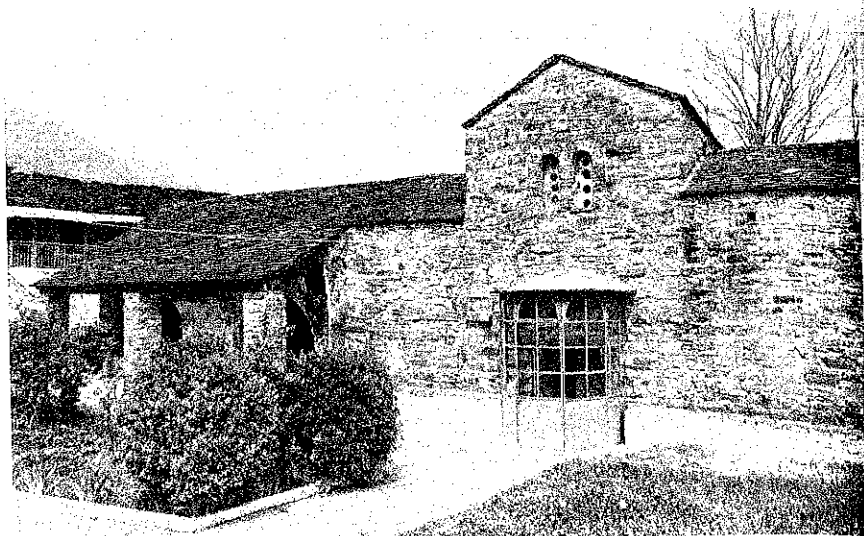


Figure 6.1 The eastern part of the *katholikon* of the Monastery of the Dormition of the Virgin (Theotokos Molybdoskepastos). Source: Photo provided by author.

to other patriographic writings of other monastic centers of the early post-Byzantine period.<sup>3</sup>

In a recent book I have studied in detail the donor inscriptions of this monastery as well as the inscriptions of the nearby monasteries in the wider region of Dipalitsa/Molybdoskepastos.<sup>4</sup> According to the donor inscription of the Dormition of the Virgin (Theotokos Molybdoskepastos) monastery, dated December 1, 1521/22, two earlier renovations of the monastery predated the current one. The information from the donor inscription spans two different time periods. Emperor Constantine IV is mentioned first (as *Μπωγωνᾶτος* instead of the correct *Πωγωνᾶτος*, in order to match his cognomen to the name of the residents of the region, that is, *Μπωγωνιανῆται*).<sup>5</sup> This information is confirmed by another inscription along the outer western wall of the *katholikon*: the two earlier donors are depicted, one of which is the founder Constantine IV. This inscription is slightly older than the one located inside the *katholikon* and dates back to the May 9, 1521/22.<sup>6</sup> No excavations of the foundation of the *katholikon* have taken place and therefore an early dating for the construction of the church, that is, during the reign of Constantine IV (668–685), cannot be confirmed by architectural data. The earliest dating, according to present data, places the erection of the *katholikon* somewhere around 1300 or, at the latest, in the 1310s and 1320s.<sup>7</sup>

Besides the monastery of the Dormition of the Virgin (Theotokos Molybdoskepastos) there are other monuments in the wider region of Konitsa



Figure 6.2 The western part of the *katholikon* of the Monastery of the Dormition of the Virgin (Theotokos Molybdoskepastos). Source: Photo provided by author.

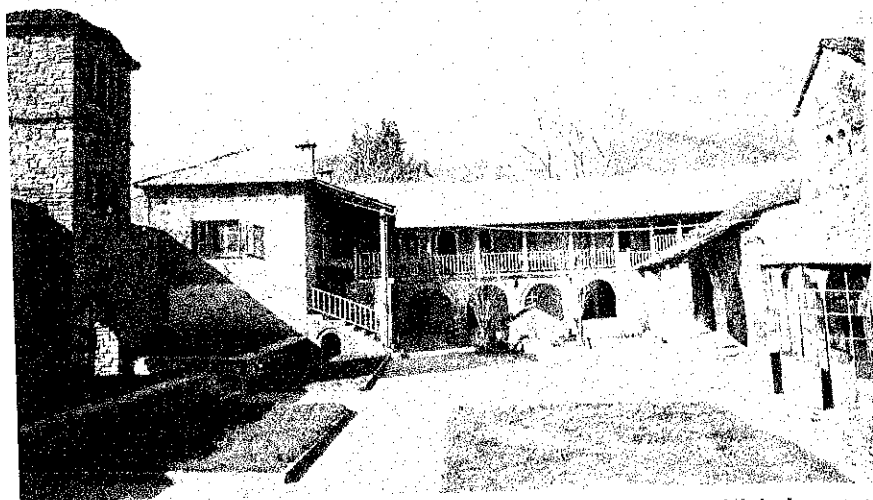


Figure 6.3 The Monastery of the Dormition of the Virgin (Theotokos Molybdoskepastos).  
Source: Photo provided by author.

that were, according to tradition, founded by the emperor Constantine IV. However, the monastery of the Dormition of the Virgin (Theotokos Molybdoskepastos) is the only case in which this tradition is reflected in a donor inscription and in a fresco portrait of this emperor on the outer wall of the monastery's *katholikon*.

In close proximity to the monastery lies the Mesogephyra, an archaeological site of the Roman times,<sup>8</sup> whose crumbling bridge is also said to have been built by Constantine IV. Tradition has it that the monastery was established by Emperor Constantine IV on his return from his alleged campaign in Sicily, supported by another local belief that the erection of bridges would facilitate the passing of his troops through the region. My firm belief is that the bridge linked to the Byzantine emperor can be identified with the one in Mesogephyra. The presence of the Roman architectural remnants and, in particular, the fortification strengthens the hypothesis of that the imperial troops were passing through this area. The information provided by the dating of the relics makes this tradition plausible.<sup>9</sup>

The next church that tradition ties to the emperor Constantine IV is the church of the Transfiguration of the Savior at Kledonia. The church of the Transfiguration of the Savior at Kledonia is a monument from the thirteenth or the fourteenth century<sup>10</sup> that assumed the form it has today during the late Byzantine era. The initial Byzantine church was bigger than the later

Byzantine renovation preserved to this day. Oral tradition connects the erection of the church with the Emperor Constantine IV.<sup>11</sup>

The monastery of the Dormition of the Virgin<sup>12</sup> is situated in the village Zerma (now Plagia), close to the old national road between Konitsa and Kozane. According to tradition, this monastery was erected by Emperor Constantine IV in 679. The tradition also describes how it was destroyed by a landslide many years later. Thus, it was built anew in the beginning of the twelfth century in its current location, on a plateau elevated two hundred meters in comparison to the previous location. During the fourteenth century, the monastery was renovated once again, according to the same tradition.<sup>13</sup> It should be stressed that the oral tradition regarding the case of the monastery of the Dormition of the Virgin at Zerma has an almost identical pattern to the one pertaining to the monastery of the Dormition of the Virgin (Theotokos Molybdoskepastos): The monastery was founded by the emperor Constantine IV; it was destroyed and rebuilt at an earlier time; a second, more recent renovation followed.

To the northwest of Gjirokastra (Argyrokastion) in modern Albania,<sup>14</sup> near the villages Gardiki, Maskolouri, Choumelitsa, Plesati, and Progge there is an abandoned monastery devoted to Saint Nikolaos.<sup>15</sup> This monastery is also known as the monastery of Ypseles Petras (Monastery of the High Rock) or the monastery of Tsepou. Tradition provides us with two versions regarding the foundation of the monastery. According to the first version, the founder of the monastery was the Emperor Justinian I (527–565). According to the second version, the monastery of Tsepou was founded by Emperor Constantine IV and after its destruction it was rebuilt by the Emperor Andronikos I Komnenos (1183–1185). However, the inscriptions of the monastery (from the late eighteenth century) make no mention of the aforementioned emperors.<sup>16</sup>

In the village Liaskobetsi (now Leptokarya, in the region of the Central Zagori)<sup>17</sup> there is a chapel devoted to the Saints Constantine and Helena. According to tradition, there was an *εἰκόνη*<sup>18</sup> in the same place the church stands today, built as a reminder of Constantine IV's passing through the area with his troops during his return from Illyricum. A more recent marble plate informs us that during the twentieth century the *εἰκόνη* was torn down and in its place this particular church was built. Prior to the church's erection this site was called "*στον Κωνσταντῖνο*" (= to Constantine), while today it is called "*στον Ἅγ. Κωνσταντῖνο*" (= to Saint Constantine).<sup>19</sup>

According to its donor inscription, the monastery of the Dormition of the Virgin (or monastery of Boutsas), close to the village of Grebeniti in the region of the Eastern Zagori, is also founded by Emperor Constantine IV. The inscription (dating from 1680)<sup>20</sup> provides the information that the founder of this monastery was also the emperor Constantine IV, in this case mentioned as *Γεγονάτος*.<sup>21</sup>

Many other monasteries in Epirus are by tradition linked to the capital of the Empire: to Byzantine emperors, members of imperial families, or prominent members of the Byzantine court. The foundation of the monastery of Rogkobou, which is situated between the villages Kapesovo and Tsepelovo is linked to Poulcheria, the sister of the Byzantine emperor Roman III Argyros (1028–1034). The monastery is dedicated to the Nativity of John Prodromos. According to the donor inscription, the destroyed monastery was rebuilt in 1749 by the monk Christodoulos from the village Loupsiko (now Lykorrache).<sup>22</sup> Poulcheria lived between 965 and 1034. During the reign of emperor Basil II she married Basil Skleros, son of Roman Skleros and grandson of Bardas Skleros. During her brother's reign she obtained great political influence and was a pronounced opponent of the empress Zoe. As a result, she and her husband were later exiled, accused of participating in a conspiracy.<sup>23</sup>

The monastery of the Nativity of the Virgin in Kabasila of Konitsa appears to have been built by Alexios Kabasilas, a general of the emperor Andronikos II Palaiologos (1282–1328).<sup>24</sup> It is quite apparent that in this case there is an attempt to link the toponym to the etymologically similar name of the monastery's founder. This is not the only case where the toponym is similar to the name of founder of the monastery.

The monastery of the Hypapante is situated in southern Albania, close to the beach of Drymades and sixty kilometers from the Greek–Albanian border. The tradition claims that it was founded by Anna Komnene (1083–ca. 1553/5), who used the monastery and its baths as a resort for her vacation. These particular baths were, again according to tradition, built by emperor Justinian I in order to rest his troops returning from or preparing for the campaigns in the West. The story about the usage of the monastery's facilities as a station for the troops implies a frequent if not a mandatory passing of the troops through this monastery. I. Chouliaras connects this monastery to the not precisely dated, sixteenth-century monuments in the region. A part of the decoration along the northern and the southern wall of the main church with full-length depictions of saints on horseback is attributed to the painter Nikolaos,<sup>25</sup> son of Onouphrios.<sup>26</sup>

Tradition links indirectly the monastery of Hagios Athanasios of Politsiane<sup>27</sup> to the emperor Justinian I. It is, however, well established that the monastery was built in 1080 as a *metochion* of the monastery Panagia of Pera (or Mprodetsi of Politsiane). Another recorded tradition informs that the monastery of Panagia of Pera was built by a Byzantine princess named Anna in the seventh century.<sup>28</sup>

The monastery of Hagios Nikolaos of Mesopotamon (southwest of Delbino) is according to tradition a foundation of Emperor Constantine I, built in 306 and rebuilt in 1043 by Emperor Constantine IX Monomachos.<sup>29</sup>

The foundation of the monastery of the Dormition of the Virgin or Panagia Soronia (or Saronia) is connected, in accordance with tradition, to the emperor Theodosius I (379–395). Tradition states that during the same period Saint Donatos lived in the monastery and that the saint managed to kill a great man-eating dragon that would not let people get the water from a nearby spring.<sup>30</sup>

The monastery of the Dormition of the Virgin of Rabenia close to the village Gorantzi was according to tradition founded by Emperor Justinian I on top of the ruins of an ancient Greek altar.<sup>31</sup> An inscription on the apse of the *katholikon* dates from 1620/21. The rest of the church's walls were painted in two phases: in the mid-seventeenth century and during the 1770s by the painters Michael and Constantine from Linotopi, and by Ioannes from Grammos, respectively.<sup>32</sup>

The monastery of Prophet Elias in Stegopole of Liountze<sup>33</sup> is also linked to Justinian I. The main church was painted by the painters Constantine and Nikolaos from Linotopi in 1653<sup>34</sup> and the narthex in 1671 by the brothers Demetrios and Georgios from Grammos.<sup>35</sup>

Another monastery whose foundation the tradition ascribes to Emperor Justinian I is the monastery of the Dormition of the Virgin of Dryano, situated in the region of Dropulli.<sup>36</sup> This tradition is also attested to in a patriarchal letter of the eighteenth century.<sup>37</sup>

Regarding the monastery of the Dormition of the Virgin of Zonaria or Kakiomenou close to the village Katouna of Dropulli,<sup>38</sup> the monastery of the Dormition of the Virgin of Dibroounion (or Stylou and Dirbes),<sup>39</sup> and the monastery of the Nativity of the Virgin of Doubiane<sup>40</sup> (or monastery of Hagia Ioulitta) the tradition vaguely states that they were built during the reign of the Komnenian dynasty (1081–1185).

The monastery of the Dormition of the Virgin at Bigla of Arta (or monastery of Rodia) is a distinct case and was founded according to tradition by the Byzantine emperor Ioannes Tzimiskes (969–976).<sup>41</sup>

The monastery of Panagia of Blachernai in Parga appears according to tradition to have been founded by Byzantine colonists who settled in the region in the mid-fourteenth century.<sup>42</sup> Preserved to this day, the monastery (especially its belfry) is dated to the eighteenth century.<sup>43</sup>

The monastery of the Dormition of the Virgin or monastery of Ragiou appears to have been built either in the twelfth century by the Emperor Manuel Komnenos (1143–1180) or in the thirteenth century by the Emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos (1261–1282).<sup>44</sup>

The monastery of Hagios Georgios of Kamytsiane owes its name, according to tradition, to a Byzantine general named Basileios Kamytses, who apparently built a town after the destruction of Bouthrint by the Goths in vicinity to the modern village of Tsamantas.<sup>45</sup>



The monastery of Hagia Paraskevi in Monodendri was built according to tradition during the thirteenth century by hermits that resided in the nearby caves, and it represents another distinct case.

The disciples of the Apostles Peter and Paul<sup>46</sup> according to tradition have operated in the monastery of the Transfiguration in Plakote (Thesprotia). This tradition is unique for the monasteries of Epirus since it is not related to the establishment of the monastery but to the presence of the Apostles' disciples in an already existent foundation.

It should come as no surprise that all the traditions regarding monasteries in Epirus link those buildings to the Byzantine past. It is quite understandable that the local Christian population sought connections to the Christian Byzantine Empire and its center, but their aspirations had a practical side to them as well. Through direct connection with Constantinople and Byzantine Emperors, local and regional Christian monuments received much greater prestige in the eyes of the faithful, both as religious centers and places of pilgrimage,<sup>47</sup> compared to other monasteries that could not pride themselves with the imperial or Byzantine background. It has little significance that the majority of the monasteries presented above date from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, that is, from the first centuries after the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans.

## NOTES

1. P. Soustal and J. Koder, *Nikopolis und Kephallēnia* (Tabula Imperii Byzantini 3) (Vienna, 1981), p. 140.
2. Since 2013, very successful restoration works have taken place in the *katholikōn* of the monastery which have revealed its wall paintings in their full beauty, while excavations in the northern and southern parts brought to light the foundations of the chapels.
3. Ch. Karanasios, "Το Χρονικό της Παγωνιανής," *Μεσαιωνιά και Νέα Ελληνικά* 9 (2008), pp. 119–42.
4. Ch. Stavrakos, *The Sixteenth Century Donor Inscriptions of the Monastery of the Dormition of the Virgin (Theotokos Molybdoskepastos). The Legend of the Emperor Constantine IV as Founder of Monasteries in Epirus* (Wiesbaden, 2013).
5. Stavrakos, *Donor Inscriptions*, pp. 121ff.
6. Stavrakos, *Donor Inscriptions*, pp. 151–5.
7. N. Kapones, *Η ναοδομική αρχιτεκτονική του Δεσποτάτου της Ηπείρου την περίοδο της δυναστείας των Κομνηνών Αγγέλων (1204–1318)* (unpublished PhD thesis) (Agrinio, 2005), pp. 166–171.
8. K. Zachos, "Η μαρτυρία του αρχαιολόγου," in B. Nitsiakos (ed.), *Η Κόνιτσα και τα χωριά της* (Ioannina, 2008), pp. 66–8.
9. K. Thesprotou and A. Psalida, "Γεωγραφία 'Αλβανίας και 'Ηπείρου," in A. Papacharises (ed.), *Εξ ανέκδοτου χειρογράφου τοῦ Κοσμῆ Θεσπρωτοῦ με*

- τοπογραφικά σχεδιογραφήματα καὶ γεωγραφικοὺς χάρτας τοῦ ἰδίου (Ioannina, 1964), p. 82.
10. D. Triantaphyllopoulos, "Εκκλησιαστικά μνημεῖα στὴν Κλειδωνιά Κονίτσης," *Ηπειρωτικά Χρονικά* 19 (1975), pp. 9–16.
11. Stavrakos, *Donor Inscriptions*, p. 190.
12. D. Kamaroulis, *Τὰ μοναστήρια τῆς 'Ηπείρου I-II* (Athens, 1996), pp. 198–204; M. Veikou, *Byzantine Epirus: A Topography of Transformation: Settlements of the Seventh–Twelfth Centuries in Southern Epirus and Aetoloacarnania, Greece* (Leiden, 2012).
13. Kamaroulis, *Μοναστήρια I*, p. 198.
14. Soustal–Koder, *Nikopolis*, pp. 111–2.
15. Stavrakos, *Donor Inscriptions*, pp. 192–3.
16. Stavrakos, *Donor Inscriptions*, pp. 192ff.
17. K. Oikonomou, *Οικονόμια του νομοῦ Ἰωαννίνων. Γλωσσική εξέταση* (2nd edition) (Ioannina, 2006), p. 172.
18. It is a small-sized building with an icon inside, used by passersby as a place of worship and for lighting candles.
19. B. Audes, *Τὸ χωρίον Λιασκοβέτσιον νῦν Λεπτοκαρυά* (unpublished essay) (N.d.), p. 29; Stavrakos, *Donor Inscriptions*, pp. 196–7.
20. Stavrakos, *Donor Inscriptions*, pp. 180ff.
21. Stavrakos, *Donor Inscriptions*, pp. 187ff.
22. Kamaroulis, *Μοναστήρια I*, pp. 337–8.
23. R. J. Lilie et al. (eds.), *Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit. Erste Abteilung (641–867)* (Berlin, 1998–2003), no. 26781.
24. Kamaroulis, *Μοναστήρια I*, p. 165.
25. M. Chatzidakis and E. Drakopoulou, *Ἑλληνες ζωγράφοι μετὰ τὴν ἄλωση (1450–1830) II* (Athens, 1997), p. 235.
26. G. Gounares, *Οἱ τοιχογραφίες των Ἁγίων Αποστόλων καὶ τῆς Παναγίας Ρασιώτισσας στὴν Καστοριά* (Thessalonica, 1980); G. Babic, "Les fresques du peintre Onuphrius sur les murs des églises de la Région de Prilep," *Zbornik za Likovne Umetnosti* 16 (1980), pp. 271–9; Chatzidakis and Drakopoulou, *Ζωγράφοι*, pp. 256–8.
27. Kamaroulis, *Μοναστήρια II*, pp. 433–6; I. Chouliaras, *Η εντομία θρησκευτική ζωγραφική του 16ου καὶ 17ου αἰώνα στο Δυτικὸ Ζαγόρι* (Athens, 2009), p. 511; A. Karamperide, *Η μονή Πατέρων καὶ ἡ ζωγραφική του 16ου καὶ 17ου αἰώνα στὴν περιοχή τῆς Ζίτσας Ἰωαννίνων* (Ioannina, 2009), p. 388.
28. Stavrakos, *Donor Inscriptions*, pp. 200–1.
29. Kamaroulis, *Μοναστήρια II*, pp. 519ff (with older bibliography); see also P. Bokotopoulos, "Ὁ ναός του Παντοκράτορος στο Μοναστηράκι Βονίτσης," *Δελτίον τῆς Χριστιανικῆς Αρχαιολογικῆς Εταιρείας [ΔΧΑΕ]* 10 (1980–1981), pp. 370–1 and note 40; A. Pasale, "Ἡ Μεγάλῃ Παναγιά στὴν Παραμυθιά Θεσπρωτίας," *ΔΧΑΕ* 19 (1996–1997), pp. 385–6 and notes 89–90; Stavrakos, *Donor Inscriptions*, p. 202.
30. Kamaroulis, *Μοναστήρια II*, pp. 512–5.
31. Kamaroulis, *Μοναστήρια II*, pp. 468–9.
32. Karamperide, *Μονή Πατέρων*, p. 389; Chouliaras, *Δυτικὸ Ζαγόρι*, p. 512.

33. Kamaroulias, *Μοναστήρια II*, pp. 475–7; K. G. Giakoumes, “Κριτική έκδοση επιγραφών συνεργείων από το Λινοτόπι στις περιφέρειες της Ορθόδοξης Εκκλησίας της Αλβανίας,” *ΔΧΑΕ* 21 (2000), pp. 261–2.
34. See A. Tourta, “Εικόνες ζωγράφων από το Λινοτόπι (16ος–17ος αιώνας). Νέα στοιχεία και διαπιστώσεις για τη δραστηριότητά τους,” *ΔΧΑΕ* 22 (2001), pp. 349.
35. Chouliaras, *Δυτικό Ζαγόρι*, p. 513; Karamperide, *Μονή Πατέρων*, p. 390.
36. Kamaroulias, *Μοναστήρια II*, pp. 450–7; Stavrakos, *Donor Inscriptions*, p. 203.
37. Kamaroulias, *Μοναστήρια II*, p. 450; K. Giakoumis, *The Monasteries of Jorgucat and Vanishte in Dropull and of Spelaio in Lunxheri as Monuments and Institutions During the Ottoman Period in Albania (16th–19th Centuries) I-II* (unpublished PhD thesis) (Birmingham, 2002), pp. 178, 183, 312.
38. Kamaroulias, *Μοναστήρια II*, pp. 443–4.
39. Kamaroulias, *Μοναστήρια II*, pp. 507–10; Karamperide, *Μονή Πατέρων*, p. 388 (with further bibliography); Chouliaras, *Δυτικό Ζαγόρι*, p. 511 (the frescoes were painted in 1603 by the Grammostinoi painters, Michael and Konstantinos).
40. Kamaroulias, *Μοναστήρια II*, pp. 462–5 (another tradition links the establishment of the monastery to the Serbian rule in Epirus during the second half of the fourteenth century); Chouliaras, *Δυτικό Ζαγόρι*, p. 510 (according to an inscription the church’s walls were painted in 1594–95).
41. Kamaroulias, *Μοναστήρια II*, pp. 315–22 (with older bibliography). In the narthex of the Kokkine Ekklesia at Boulgareli of Arta there are portraits of Theodoros Tzimiskes *πρωτοστάτωρ* and his brother Ioannes (painted in the year 1295/96).
42. Kamaroulias, *Μοναστήρια I*, pp. 376–8.
43. P. Bokotopoulos, “Βυζαντινά και Μεσαιωνικά μνημεία Ἡπείρου. Μονή Βλαχερνῶν Πάργας,” *Αρχαιολογικόν Δελτίον* 24 (1969), p. 256.
44. Kamaroulias, *Μοναστήρια II*, pp. 33–5.
45. Stavrakos, *Donor Inscriptions*, p. 204.
46. Kamaroulias, *Μοναστήρια II*, pp. 44–6.
47. A very interesting study: A. Külzer, “Handelsgüter und Verkehrswege: Wirtschaftliche Aspekte byzantinischer Pilgerzentren,” in E. Kislinger, J. Koder, and A. Külzer (eds.), *Handelsgüter und Verkehrswege. Aspekte der Warenversorgung im Östlichen Mittelmeerraum (4. Bis 15. Jahrhundert)* (Vienna, 2010), pp. 185–6.

## Part II

# THE PERIPHERIES: IN THE SHADOW OF CONSTANTINOPL AND ITS INFLUENCE

## Chapter 7

# Studenica and the Life Giving Tree

Jelena Erdeljan

This chapter, focused on some of the aspects of the presence and modes of (re)presentation of the topic of the Life Giving Tree in Studenica, is one of a series of texts published by the author and aimed at contributing to a general reassessment of the political context, purpose, function, and visual identity of Studenica—a landmark monument of Nemanide Serbia founded, built and decorated with frescoes in the years immediately before and after the first fall of Constantinople.<sup>1</sup> A unique phenomenon in the visual culture of the Balkans in the high Middle Ages and Stefan Nemanja's major foundation in Serbia, its founding and visual fashioning marked the height of his political career, the turning point in both his personal life and on the general path of history of his state and dynasty. As such, and with the subsequent shaping of this locus as the center of dynastic cult of Stefan Nemanja, this endowment of his remained one with deepest impact in Serbian visual arts of the Middle Ages and beyond. This chapter is, therefore, aimed at tracing the trajectories of research and presenting questions, in this case those regarding the issue of Studenica and the Life Giving Tree, to be investigated in greater detail in the future, rather than any conclusive remarks.<sup>2</sup>

The topos and visual motif of the Life Giving Tree in Studenica is ubiquitous and striking. One may freely say that it is the defining element of the sacral and, accordingly, visual identity of its *katholikon* church of the Virgin, dedicated to the feast of the Dormition. Moreover, the topic of the Life Giving Tree is present and expressed there in its multiple hypostases, presenting, thus, the story of the Holy Wood of the Life Giving Cross through which earthly and heavenly paradise are (re)united into one.

Most conspicuous, and investigated most thoroughly to this day in historiography, is the body of the Holy Cross present in relic and through vicarious visibility, that is, iconic presence materialized and activated through

the fresco of the Crucifixion that dominates practically the entire western wall of the naos.<sup>3</sup> Less studied, however, is the presence in the liturgical, performative, spatial, and visual definition of Studenica of elements of the Legend of Holy Wood, of the phases in the history of the wood of the Holy Cross, that is, of the Life-Giving Tree,<sup>4</sup> which are crucially significant and thus spatially and visually strategically positioned within the body of the church of the Virgin Evergetis. This so far neglected issue, is in our opinion highly significant given both the generic relation between the Holy Cross and the Life Giving Tree and the employ of both the topic and the actual relic of the cross itself in contemporaneous rhetoric, politics, and policies of the Byzantine church and state<sup>5</sup>—not only generally, within the framework of *Zeitgeist* surrounding the first fall of Constantinople and change in world order, but also more particularly in the theological and political thought, church and state policy, of Stefan Nemanja and St. Sava the Serbian, first and foremost, as the key ideologue of the Nemanide dynastic program.<sup>6</sup>

Of the presence of the relic of the Holy Cross in Studenica we learn from written sources, the *Vita* of Symeon Nemanja composed by his son Stefan the First-Crowned. The advent to this holy place of a particle of the Holy Wood, incorporated into a personal pectoral, is dated to 1198, dispatched from Mt. Athos to Studenica by Nemanja and, in the words of Stefan the First-Crowned, repositied in a "place already prepared for it" in the church of the Virgin. Studenica, thus, effectively became a reliquary and a place of cult of the Holy Cross.<sup>7</sup>

The origin and provenance of this relic in Nemanja's possession is one of many issues deserving further investigation and lacking in attention in existing historiography. Its imperial nature indicates its imperial origins, by all means. Exactly when and how this precious piece of Holy Wood came into Nemanja's possession remains uncharted. On the other hand, the implication and political function of the relic viewed against the broader backdrop of the given historical circumstances of the Komnenian period in the Byzantine Commonwealth, including Nemanide Serbia, has received noted scholarly attention.<sup>8</sup> Entwined with such dynastic agency, and by virtue of its power versus the Bogumil heretics, in Studenica the relic of the Holy Cross was also a vehicle of confirmation of this *locus sanctus* as a tower of True Faith.<sup>9</sup>

In vicarious presence, that is, iconic presence, the (relic of the) Cross has always been present through the majestic Crucifixion on the western wall of the naos. The agency of this image, as of all images, was multiple because, and especially so in the Middle Ages, there was (and still is) no pure visuality. The Crucifixion, an emblem of salvation, redemption, and victory over sin, evoked the words of the Gospel, the ritual and chants of the Liturgy,

hymns and prayers, as well as popular beliefs and magical incantations and prophylactic uses of amulets with supplicatory addresses to the Holy Wood and small crosses worn on the bodies of the faithful.<sup>10</sup>

The Crucifixion, representing the body of Christ on the cross, is, of course, intrinsically related to the dogma of the Incarnation. This idea was elaborated in sophisticated terms by iconophile theologians such as John of Damascus and Theodore Studite, who points out, in the second homily on the Adoration of the Cross, that whatever power resides in the type or sign of the cross, so much more must exist in the figure of the crucified Christ.<sup>11</sup> The Crucifixion has unsurpassed eucharistic significance and assumes therefore, as has rightly been pointed out in historiography, a prominent place in the programs of churches at the time of Christological disputes of the Komnenian period,<sup>12</sup> when the emperor Manuel I, whose identity was carefully structured in court rhetoric of Eusthathios of Thessalonike as that of both *alter Christos* and *rex imago Dei*, as well as *eisoapostolos*, himself presided over trials of apostates or heretics of all kinds, including Bogumils.<sup>13</sup>

These same qualities of guardian and instructor of Orthodoxy are also, and quite logically given the position and task of Nemanja within the Komnenian hierarchy and Byzantine state and church administration in the Balkans in the days of Manuel I, as well as the nature of their relation, highly prominent in constructing the image of Nemanja as an ideal Christian ruler in hagiography, in the *Vita* composed as the introductory part of the typikon of Studenica by his son, St. Sava. "For what shall we call him? A ruler and an instructor, at that? For he had fortified and instilled reason into the hearts of all and instructed us in the ways of keeping the true faith in God in the manner of orthodox Christians. This piety he had shown first himself, and had then instructed the others, sanctified churches, raised monasteries." In addressing his people, his descendents and his lords, Nemanja pointed out: "And all of you, as well as my children, I nourished you to this day, and thought you to keep the true faith. . . . And they wept and said unto him: Leave us not, oh Sire, for you have sanctified us and instructed us and enlightened us, oh good shephard, one who gives up his soul for his flock (Jn. 10, 15), for never in your day has the wolf grabbed any of the sheep from the flock which the Lord had entrusted you with!"<sup>14</sup>

At the same time, the image of the Crucifixion also alludes to the veneration and use of the Holy Cross as relic of imperial status and the center/s of veneration and dissemination of the cult—Constantinople and, ultimately, Jerusalem, as well as the imperial protagonists of the cult and *inventio* and *exaltatio* of the relic—Constantine and Heraclius, two emperors key in fashioning the image and identity of the ideal Christian ruler—one whose victories are achieved under (the sign of) the cross and whose duty it is to suppress enemies of True Faith,<sup>15</sup> a cause shared before and after the first fall



of Constantinople by both the Emperor of the Rhomaioi and the Holy Roman Emperor, by the church of Rome as much as that of Constantinople.

Of the celebration of feasts, and pertaining litanias, of the Cross at Studenica we know nothing, nor, accordingly, of their possible influence on the spatial articulation, architectural and visual features of the church, and the space of the monastery complex as a whole. In that vein, it would be particularly significant to investigate the connection, correlation between the relic of the Cross and the dedication of the church of the Virgin to the feast of the Dormition, in view, not only of the theological link between the Cross and the Virgin, the Virgin as type of Cross, but also of the liturgical use of the relic in celebrations, litanias tied to the feast cycle of the Dormition beginning with August 1st and the Lesser Blessing of Water, performed in Constantinople.<sup>16</sup> The late twelfth-century phiale for the blessing of the water in front of the original facade of the church of the Virgin, now in the southeastern corner of the exonarthex, must have been one of the liturgical focal points in the celebratory staging of the August feast cycle in Studenica.

On the other hand, we could, perhaps, trace the manner in which the ritual celebration of the feast of the Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life Giving Cross (September 14th) left its mark on the body and visual identity of Studenica. This Feast is an opportunity outside of the observances of Holy Week to celebrate the full significance of the victory of the Cross over the powers of the world, and the triumph of the wisdom of God through the Cross over the wisdom of this world. This Feast also gives the Church an opportunity to relish the full glory of the Cross as a source of light, hope, and victory for Christ's people. It is also a time to celebrate the universality of the work of redemption accomplished through the Cross: the entire universe is seen through the light of the Cross, the new Tree of Life, which provides nourishment for those who have been redeemed in Christ.<sup>17</sup>

The light of the cross shining through and filling the cosmos, present in relic and image inside the body of the church at Studenica, could have been perceived as emanating (symbolically and physically) through twin windows, one on each side of the Crucifixion on the western wall. These windows, which otherwise have no architectural purpose, are there for pure theatrical, lighting effect, and correspond in direct line with the two biphoras on the western wall of the original narthex, that is, the window openings on the western facade of the church of the Virgin. The crosses painted on their inner sides are traces of a virtual trail of light leading further afield. Thus, the figurative, symbolic fire, which had actually historically materialized in the miracle of Apamea in the sixth century, and light of the Holy Cross could have been seen as shining through, emanating from the entire body of Studenica, by agency of the visual medium of its facades in white marble, a material of *acheiropoitos* qualities, associative of the primordial *oceanos*

of creation, ice imbued with fire, Epiphany, and filling the *oikoumene* with True Faith.<sup>18</sup> The white, pure light of the marble body of Studenica's church of the Virgin combined with the red of the dome could have been perceived as both the fire emanating from the cross giving off the divine light and the very flesh and blood of the Logos incarnate present symbolically at the eucharist. A sophisticated rhetoric of materiality and chromatism must have been highly instrumental in delivering the political, ideological and dogmatic message of Orthodoxy, in making Studenica happen as Nemanja's tower of True Faith.

The (interconnected) liturgical, ideological, political, and visual phenomena discussed above are all related to (the relic of) the True Cross. They belong to and are evocative of the point in the history of the holy wood which is most directly linked to the crucial event in the history of salvation, the Crucifixion of the Savior. Apart from this moment in the history and legend of Holy Wood, central in every way, there are (visually represented) yet others which play an important role in defining the (visual) identity and purpose of Studenica. One refers to its very origins and thus links Paradise Lost with Paradise Promised, the old and the new Adam, the Cross and its urancestor, the Life Giving Tree. It is represented by and thus present in the program of the finely carved marble sculptural decoration of the south portal of the church of the Virgin. Interlaced vines and vegetation, the so-called floral ornaments, actually the motif of the tree shooting roots, are a dominant feature of the program of decoration of the south portal of the church of the Virgin at Studenica. Classical iconographic analyses have already proposed that, for example, one of the species be identified as *finik*, a type of palm referred to in Byzantine and Serbian liturgical poetry and hagiography and used to denote the blessed and the righteous, dwellers of Paradise.<sup>19</sup>

There are, however, possible further iconological interpretations, opening to a broader view, particularly within the methodological approach of new iconology. Observed outside the box of strict botanical identification and linguistic particularism, the key denominator of the overall program of the south portal of the Church of the Virgin at Studenica lies precisely in the various types of vegetation that could only grow together to make up the *paradeisos* of the protological Eden (Gan Eden, Gan Elohim), the protological Temple, thus heralding the eschatological Eden and Temple through the realization of the *oikonomia* of salvation of Divine Providence, with its high point in the crucifixion. The different sorts of vegetation represented on the south portal of Studenica also alluded to the (three) different species of wood springing from the seed brought back from Eden and planted in Adam's skull-mouth—cedar, pine, and cypress. In all, this would point to the story of the paradisaical origins of the Wood of the Holy Cross, that is, the Life Giving Tree, and its (predestined) eschatological purpose.<sup>20</sup>

What is more, in making sense of the spatial code, that is, of the symbolic space that cannot exist without having in mind the ideology and the needs that triggered its creation<sup>21</sup> we have to take into consideration the implications and connotations of the south orientation chosen to represent visually this episode in the history of the Wood of the Holy Cross, that is, the Life Giving Tree. In Jewish and subsequently Christian tradition, from Old Testament times on, the south was the side chosen for trees of life, vegetation demonstrating the *shekinah*. It was the south side of the inner space of the Tabernacle, in front of the Parochet, which was the spot designated by the Lord himself, conveyed through Moses and actuated by Bezalel, for the Menorah, a sign of eternal covenant between God and Israel, and fashioned in the form of *amygdalos*, sweet almond sprouts and flower cups, that is, a Tree of Life holding the eternal light.<sup>22</sup>

In the spatial and historical reality of Studenica, south of the Church of the Virgin, symbolically and liturgically perceived as the (New) Tabernacle, that is, Temple, stands, since the beginning of the fourteenth century, the church of SS. Joachim and Anna, also known as the King's church (Kraljeva crkva).<sup>23</sup> Its dedication to the parents of Mary offers direct reference to the pool of Bethesda, Piscina Probatica—not only the place of Jesus's miraculous healing of the paralytic but also the birthplace of the Virgin, the New Ark of the Covenant, true New Temple, Vessel of Logos Incarnate, the True Rood. Moreover, in the Legend of the True Cross the Pool of Bethesda is identified as the place of reappearance, surfacing of the wood of the Cross at the time of Christ's passion. While referring in dedication to the Pool of Bethesda, the actual location of the church of SS. Joachim and Anna at Studenica, to the south of the church of the Virgin, seen in every aspect as the New Temple, is evocative of yet another location in the Christian hierotopy of Jerusalem that is also associated with the wood of the Cross, that of the Pool of Siloam into which, according to certain versions of the medieval Legend of the True Cross, Solomon had tossed the tree that, laden with Messianic purpose, resisted all attempts to fashion it into a structural element of his Temple. This was the tree that grew in Jerusalem from the grave of Adam and sprang there from a twig obtained from Paradise which Seth received from the archangel Michael, an offshoot of the Tree of Life. In the actual geography of Jerusalem, the Pool of Siloam lies to the south of Temple Mount.<sup>24</sup>

At this point in tracing the sacral points in the history of Holy Wood at Studenica, it seems called for to make an excursus into its, closely interassociated, temporal history and materiality and focus our attention on the materiality, not only the atemporal symbolism, of the location of the church of SS. Joachim and Anna. Why was precisely this spot within the monastic complex chosen by King Milutin at the beginning of the fourteenth century, its frescoed dated to 1314, for the raising of his flagship endowment displaying the

long inscription of lineage and messages of legitimacy? Was this the nexus of the original sacred space of the monastery? What, if anything, stood at the location of the church in the days of Nemanja himself and the founding of Studenica in the final decades of the twelfth century? Are there traces of any structures underneath the present, King Milutin's, fourteenth-century church? If so, what could its original function have been? Could it have served as the original sanctuary of the monastery, in place and in liturgical function prior to the completion of works on the Church of the Virgin, the original sacrum, holy of holies? Could it have been constructed to house a relic or miraculous icon, and if so, what could this precious sacred warrant of salvation have been and where and without could it have come from? These and many more questions are all part of the general problem in studying (not only) Studenica and having to do with many unresolved issues regarding its chronology which would call, first and foremost, for further archaeological investigation, and a methodologically updated, more appropriate and contextualized interpretation of the sources, both written and visual.

Until this is accomplished, let us return to the visualization of the third and final, eschatological, stage in the progress of Holy Wood and its transformation into the Holy Cross. It seems to have, quite logically, been designated for the northern portal of the Church of the Virgin at Studenica. Its sculptural decoration consisting of a sole flowering cross has often been disregarded and, as a result of formalistic methodological approaches, relegated to definitions of simplicity opposed to the profusion of elaborate visual elements of the corresponding south portal of the other vestibule lateral of the central bay under the dome. Quite the contrary, its formal simplicity is emblematic. It is a visual *summa theologica sanctae crucis*, indicating the metaphorical tree of Psalm 1:1–3. *Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by the streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers.*

In view of the phenomena discussed above, one can freely say that the *fil rouge* and essence of Studenica is indeed the story of the Life Giving Tree, its life and history presented in all its phases, from Paradise to Golgotha and beyond. What could have been the function of this story? The general theme is, of course, the temporal and spatial *translatio* of Paradise into salvation history. The world that was destroyed by the Flood will be healed by the Cross. It is the universal search for Paradise, *Sehnsucht*.

But what did the entire image, visual identity of Studenica, really want, to put it bluntly in the words of W. J. T. Mitchell. And, more particularly, what did the entire discourse of the Life Giving Tree therein want? It seems to have

always wanted the same although not always for the same reasons nor always presenting its desires to the same audience. It was founded as a Tower of True Faith, directed first and foremost against the Bogomil heretics, and later became also a dynastic center as well as the very nucleus from which sprang the autocephalous Serbian church. Both functions revolved around a unique phenomenon—the Life Giving Tree of the True Cross of Christ.

## NOTES

1. J. Erdeljan, "Studenica: An Identity in Marble," *Zograf* 35 (2011), pp. 93–100; eadem, "Studenica: All Things Constantinopolitan," in I. Stevović (ed.), *Symmeikta: Collection of Papers in Honor of the 40th Anniversary of the Institute for Art History, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade* (Belgrade, 2012), pp. 93–101; eadem, "Studenica: A New Perspective?," in M. Angar and C. Sode (eds.), *Serbia and Byzantium, Proceedings of the International Conference Held on 15 December 2008 at the University of Cologne* (Frankfurt, 2013), pp. 33–43.
2. The methodological point of observing the body of Studenica is primarily that of the Visual Turn, *Bildwissenschaft*, *Bild Anthropologie*, and New Iconology—which implies a broader study of the image as a complex interplay of visuality, technology, institutions, and discourse on the body, in the sense of corporeal connection of the faithful with the spiritual that makes sacred space a dynamic space. For these methodological approaches, see H. Belting, *Bild-Anthropologie. Entwürfe für eine Bildwissenschaft* (Munich, 2001); B. Baert, "A Sign of Health: New Perspectives in Iconology," in B. Baert, A. Lehmann, and J. Van Den Akkerveken (eds.), *New Perspectives in Iconology, Visual Studies and Anthropology* (Brussels, 2011), pp. 7–14; H. Bredekamp, "A Neglected Tradition? Art History as Bildwissenschaft," *Critical Inquiry* 29–3 (Spring 2003), pp. 418–28. See also H. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford–Malden, 1991).
3. For seminal monographs and studies on Studenica and its fresco decoration, see G. Babić, V. Korać, and S. Ćirković (eds.), *Studenica* (Belgrade, 1986); M. Kašanin, M. Čanak-Medić, J. Maksimović, B. Todić, and M. Šakota, *Manastir Studenica* (Belgrade, 1986); M. Čanak-Medić and Đ. Bošković, *L'architecture de l'époque de Nemanja I. Les églises de Toplica et des vallées de l'Ibar et de Morava* (Belgrade, 1986); *Studenica i vizantijska umetnost oko 1200. godine*, ed. V. Korać (Belgrade, 1988); *Osam vekova Studenice* (Belgrade, 1986); *Blago manastira Studenice*, ed. V. J. Đurić (Belgrade, 1988).
4. For an all-encompassing study on this legend in the textual and visual tradition of the Middle Ages, see B. Baert, *A Heritage of Holy Wood: The Legend of the True Cross in Text and Image* (Leiden, 2004).
5. A. Eastmond, "Byzantine identity and relics of the True Cross in the thirteenth century," in A. Lidov (ed.), *Eastern Christian Relics* (Moscow, 2003), pp. 205–15.
6. On the question of relics and politics in medieval Serbia, see D. Popović, "Relics and politics in the Middle Ages: The Serbian approach," in A. Lidov (ed.),

*Eastern Christian Relics* (Moscow, 2003), pp. 161–80. The works of J. Erdeljan cited in note 1 discuss political thought, church and state policy of Stephen Nemanja and St. Sava the Serbian, first and foremost, as the key ideologue of the Nemanide dynastic program in relation to the question of the true nature and purpose of Studenica as both the axial church of the cult of the Holy Cross at the time of its founding c. 1183, and as the final resting place of the founder of the Nemanide dynasty, following the translation of his relics from Mt. Athos to Serbia in 1207.

7. For the transfer of Nemanja's pectoral including a particle of the True Cross from Chilandar to Studenica and Nemanja's accompanying letter to his son Stefan from the *Vita*, see M. Bašić, *Stare srpske biografije* (Belgrade, 1928), p. 53. For the historical circumstances surrounding this event and the structuring of the identity of Studenica as the reliquary of the True Cross, see J. Erdeljan, "Studenica: A New Perspective?" For Nemanja's pectoral including this relic and other royal insignia, see S. Marjanović-Dušanić, "Vladarski znaci Stefana Nemanje," in *Stefan Nemanja—Sveti Simeon Mirotočivi, Istorija i predanje* (Belgrade, 2000), pp. 77–87. The question of ubication within the church of this place already prepared for the housing of the relic of the True Cross and its structuring and material fashioning has not yet been delved into in present historiography. Given the general quality of Studenica as sacred space fashioned in the manner of all things Constantinopolitan (J. Erdeljan, "Studenica: All Things Constantinopolitan"), it would seem intriguing to examine in the future possible indicators within the material structure of the building of repositories and to seek comparison with similar structures of Constantinopolitan churches, above all the Virgin Pharos.

8. A. Eastmond, "Byzantine identity"; D. Popović, "Relics and politics."

9. J. Erdeljan, "Studenica: A New Perspective?," and eadem, "Studenica: An Identity in Marble."

10. J. A. Cotsonis, *Byzantine Figural Processional Crosses*, Catalogue of an Exhibition at Dumbarton Oaks, 23rd September 1994 through 29th January 1995, (Washington, D.C., 1994), especially pp. 8–39.

11. K. Parry, *Depicting the Word: Byzantine Iconophile Thought of the Eight and Ninth Centuries* (Leiden, 1996), in particular Eucharist and the Cross, pp. 178–190. For the homily, see *Patrologia Graeca* vol. 99, col. 692B–700B.

12. G. Babić, "Hristološke raspre u XII veku i pojava novih scena u apsidalnom dekoru vizantijskih crkava," *Zbornik za likovne umetnosti Matice Srpske* 2 (1966), pp. 11–49.

13. On constructing the image of Manuel I Komnenos as messianic king in court rhetoric, see V. Stanković, *Komnini u Carigradu (1057–1185). Evolucija jedne vladarske porodice* (Belgrade, 2006), p. 249. A treatise against the Bogumils of Constantinople, written between 1165 and 1180 by the Pisan Hugh Eteriano who, with his brother Leo the Tuscan, was in the service of emperor Manuel I, is particularly illustrative of the *contra hereos* stance of the emperor as it places emphasis on Manuel I in confronting the heresy of both Greek and Latin churches; *Christian Dualist Heresies in the Byzantine World c. 650–c. 1450*, eds. J. Hamilton and B. Hamilton, with translation of Old Slavonic texts by Y. Stoyanov (Manchester, 1998), pp. 234–50.

14. "Sveti Sava, Život Svetoga Simeona Nemanje," in *Spisi Svetog Save*, ed. V. Ćorović (Belgrade-Sremski Karlovci, 1928), p. 160. Translated from Serbian by J. Erdeljan.

15. Y. Stoyanov, *Defenders and Enemies of the True Cross: The Sassanian Conquest of Jerusalem in 614 and Byzantine Ideology of Anti-Persian Warfare* (Vienna, 2011).

16. On the Virgin as type of cross and association of Marian cult with that of the Holy Cross, especially in Constantinople following the iconoclast controversy, and in particular in the church of the Virgin Pharos in the Great Palace on Palm Sunday, see J. A. Cotsonis, *Processional Crosses*, pp. 47–9, with bibliography. On metaphorical interpretation of types associated with the Virgin Mary in liturgical poetry, see L. M. Peltomaa, *The Image of the Virgin Mary in the Akathistos Hymn* (Leiden, 2001), especially pp. 115–240. On the feasts of the Cross and the use of the relic of the True Cross in their celebration, see A. Frolov, *La relique de la Vraie Croix: recherches sur l'développement d'une culte* (Paris, 1961). On the use of Byzantine processional crosses, often containing the relic of the True Cross, and in certain instances those pertaining to the Virgin Mary, see J. A. Cotsonis, *Processional Crosses*, pp. 14–29, with sources and bibliography.

17. L. van Tongeren, *Exaltation of the Cross. Toward the Origin of the Feast of the Cross and the Meaning of the Cross in Early Medieval Liturgy* (Leuven, 2000), pp. 10–14, with sources and extensive bibliography.

18. On the symbolism and political, theological agency of the marble body of Studenica, see J. Erdeljan, "Studenica: An Identity In Marble."

19. J. Maglovski, "Studenički južni portal—Prilog ikonologiji studeničke plastike," *Zograf* 13 (1982), pp. 13–28.

20. On the stages of progress of Holy Wood, from protological to eschatological Eden, see B. Baert, *Heritage of Holy Wood*, especially chapter "From Paradise to Golgotha: The Legend of the Wood of the Cross," pp. 289–332.

21. H. Lefebvre, *Production of Space*.

22. On the form and symbolism of the menorah, see Z. Ameisonowa, "The Tree of Life in Jewish Iconography," *Journal of the Warburg Institute* (1938/39), pp. 326–45; L. Sperber, "The History of the Menorah," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 16 (1965), pp. 135–59; S. Parpola, "The Assyrian Tree of Life: Tracing the Origins of the Jewish Monotheism and Greek Philosophy," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 52/3 (1993), pp. 161–208; S. Fine, *Art and Judaism in the Graeco Roman World: Toward a New Jewish Archaeology* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 150–1.

23. G. Babić, *Kraljeva crkva u Studenici* (Belgrade, 1987).

24. Alternatively, in other, more frequent, variations the Legend identifies Piscina Probatica, that is, the Pool of Bethesda as the reservoir into which Solomon threw the holy wood. On the medieval Legend of the True Cross, the hierotopy of Jerusalem, and the wood of the Cross, see B. Baert, *Heritage of Holy Wood*. See also idem, "The Pool of Bethesda: The Cultural History of a Holy Place in Jerusalem," *Viator* 36 (2005), pp. 1–22; idem, "Hierotopy, Jerusalem, and the Legend of the Wood of the Cross," *Archaevs. Study in the History of Religion* 11–12 (2007–2008), pp. 95–116.

## Chapter 8

# Rethinking the Position of Serbia within Byzantine *Oikoumene* in the Thirteenth Century

Vlada Stanković

The Byzantine world was profoundly shaken by the Crusaders' capture of Constantinople in 1204, but the overwhelming dominance of the ramified Byzantine imperial clan over southeastern Europe, strengthened through an all-encompassing hierarchical system of mutually connected relatives, gradually put in place over the course of the previous hundred years, prevented a total political upturn in the region and enabled the continuity of intensive regional communication and cooperation.<sup>1</sup> Serbia's reaction to the events of 1204 and its position within the Byzantine world<sup>2</sup> in the course of the turbulent thirteenth century is a case in point of the functioning of the new political system in southeastern Europe that rested on the personal connection of the regional rulers directly with the Byzantine Emperor and his closest relatives, established firmly in the decades that preceded the Crusaders' sack of the Byzantine capital.

Rethinking Serbia's position in the aftermath of the catastrophe of 1204 and reexamining the thirteenth century in Byzantine world in general—and in southeastern Europe in particular—requires a decisive break with the deeply rooted assumptions in scholarship that events unfolded in a way determined by strong and "unchangeable" factors, such as ethnicity or religious orientation.<sup>3</sup> Reflection much more of national or ideological orientations of modern scholars than of historical realities of thirteenth-century southeastern Europe and the eastern Mediterranean, the dominant approach in historiography—that should be finally done away with—laid too strong an emphasis on teleological character of events, leading to a flat and linear view of the complex historical developments.<sup>4</sup> On top of that, Serbian historiography remains marred by narrow "national" approach to the set of complex problems from the Middle Ages, making too little and too insignificant progress from the Constantine Jireček's 1911 two-volume *History of the Serbs*, a complex



but irreparably outdated work of positivistic, fact-dominated erudition that viewed the relations between "states" and "nations" in the strictly antagonistic manner.<sup>5</sup>

Examples of the "counterintuitive" responds of Serbian rulers to some of the defining moments in the history of the thirteenth-century southeastern Europe—catastrophe of 1204, the rise of John Batatzes in Nicaea, Michael VIII Palaiologos's 1274 Church Union with Rome, and the reestablishment of Byzantine power in the Balkans in the late 1290s—testify for a necessity to change perspective and approach and a need to focus more on the geopolitical realities of the time studied than on the modern concepts of ethnicity and strictly defined nation-states. Contrary to the simplistic, strongly teleological view according to which it was only to be expected from all the polities strongly within Byzantine orbit in the pre-1204 world to make the equally strong turnaround toward the West and the new lords of Constantinople after the destruction of the Empire, Serbia followed different path: Unlike its neighbor Bulgaria, it remained closely connected to the surviving albeit divided Byzantine elite scattered in both Anatolia and the Balkans—with its ruler, the great zhupan Stephen, belonging to the highest circle of that elite. Serbia's reactions to defining changes within the Byzantine world from 1204 to 1299 in that sense represent an indicative cycle of surprises to the dogmatic scholarly preconceptions that do not take into account the structure and the mechanisms of the functioning of the highly organized imperial diplomacy and bureaucracy that were one of the hallmarks of the Byzantine Empire. Serbia, actually, never strayed much from the core of the Byzantine world during the thirteenth century: Not after the catastrophe of 1204 and not even after Emperor Michael VIII's "betrayal of Orthodoxy" in 1274 with the Church union with Rome signed in Lyon, that was taken as an excuse for his enemies to join forces against his somewhat miscalculated attempt to reestablish the power of Constantinople over southeastern Europe in its former glory of the pre-1204 times.<sup>6</sup>

### 1. IN A NEW WORLD AFTER 1204

The main reason for Serbia's adherence to the Byzantine world lays in the position of the great zhupan Stephen, known as the First-Crowned (1196–around 1228, crowned King in 1217) as close relative of Byzantine rulers of both Nicaea and Epirus. Already in the early 1190s, when his father Stephen Nemanya was great zhupan of Serbia, Stephen became a son-in-law of the Emperor Alexios III Angelos, honored with the exalted title of *sebastokrator*, and being treated as a member of the highest echelon of the ramified Byzantine imperial family even after receiving the royal crown from the

legates of the Pope Honorius III in 1217.<sup>7</sup> His inclusion in the Byzantine imperial family represented a crucial step toward the establishment of a strong and, it will turn out, unbreakable bond between the Serbian ruling family and the Byzantine imperial clan that will lead to a complete inclusion of Serbia in the Byzantine *Oikoumene* in the thirteenth century, exemplified in the "union" of Serbian royal lineage with the Byzantine imperial family that came about with the marriage of Serbian king Milutin with the Emperor Andronikos II's five-year-old daughter Simonis in 1299. A specific solidarity by blood, which was the major political factor in the world influenced by Byzantine Constantinople, ensured that Stephen the First-Crowned remained in close connection with his imperial relatives even after he put an abrupt end to his marriage to Byzantine princess Eudokia and swiftly remarried with Anna, the granddaughter of the doge of Venice Enrico Dandolo, at the beginning of the thirteenth century. Mistakenly used as an argument that the Serbian king "must have turned" toward the West even before the capture of Constantinople in 1204, Stephen's second nuptials point primarily to the internal strife in the Serbian ruling family, and to Stephen's attempt to prevent the offensive of his older brother Vukan, the ruler of Diokleia on the Adriatic coast and the protégé of the Pope Innocent III.<sup>8</sup>

The thirteenth century in southeastern Europe thus begun with a turmoil and internal power-struggle within Serbia even before the destruction of the Empire in 1204 brought about an overt challenge to Stephen from his older brother Vukan who was snubbed in 1196 when their father chose younger Stephen, the Emperor Alexios III's son-in-law, as his successor. The death of Stephen Nemanya—who took monastic vows and died in Hilandar on Mount Athos on 13 February 1199—signaled the beginning of the open conflict between the older Vukan and the younger Stephen for their father's legacy. Stephen Nemanya was quickly canonized as St. Simeon at the beginning of the thirteenth century, becoming the holy founder, patron and protector of his offspring, the *holy* dynasty of the Nemanjić. The legacy of Nemanya meant in the beginning primarily a right to "inherit" a very distinguished place within the circle of kinsmen that formed the political elite in the region, and the oldest brother, Vukan, seemed to have succeeded in having an upper hand in the years immediately preceding the Crusaders' sack of Constantinople. Vukan exploited to his benefit the support of Pope Innocent III, not allowing Stephen's alliance with Venice to get traction while at the same time acting as a protector of his brother's first wife, Eudokia, whom he welcomed warmly in Diokleia.<sup>9</sup>

The political earthquake caused by the events of 1204 enabled the two younger sons of Stephen Nemanya, Stephen the First-Crowned and monk (and later first archbishop of the autonomous Serbian church) Sava to obtain complete victory over the oldest Vukan. They have shared in their father's

legacy in respect to the high position within the circle of relatives and managed to obtain—especially Sava with his personal charismatic prestige of a rich prince who abandoned this world's vain fame and glory for an ascetic and spiritual life—even more exalted position on both sides of the divided Byzantine world, in Nicaea in the Asia Minor and in Epirus in the Balkans.<sup>10</sup> Owing primarily to their personal ties with the rulers of both Byzantine polities, the brothers received unprecedented secular and spiritual concessions from their Byzantine relatives, while benefiting at the same time from the change on the Papal See, where Honorius III had succeeded the stern and inflexible Innocent III, and crowned through his legates Stephen with the royal crown in the first year of his pontificate. With the simultaneous diplomatic actions in Nicaea and Epirus in 1218/9, Stephen and Sava rounded out the Serbian medieval state: In 1218 in Nicaea, Emperor Theodore Laskaris, who was married to Eudokia's older sister Anna,<sup>11</sup> granted autocephaly to the Serbian church and the Patriarch Manuel I Sarantenos consecrated Sava as its Archbishop; a year later—and despite the fact that the autonomy of Serbian church went directly against the rights of the Archbishopric of Ohrid which represented the highest spiritual power in the state of Epirus—its ambitious ruler Theodore Angelos strengthened the familial bond with the Serbian King Stephen by marrying his daughter Anna to Stephen's oldest son and heir Radoslav. That the politics in the thirteenth-century southeastern Europe was in the first place the "family affair," an endless shifting of power within the huge ramified family, is clear from the contemporary sources, Byzantine as well as Serbian, the emphasis they place on the relation of their heroes and the elaborate kinship terminology. Writing the Life of St. Sava toward the middle of the thirteenth century, his former student Domentijan made clear the importance of the saint's close relation to the Emperor of Nicaea Theodore Laskaris:

While this God-bearing Lord Sava was dwelling on Mount Athos in the monastery built by his hands doing God-pleasing duties, he received in his heart a God-wise advise and set out for the East to see his *in-law* [my emphasis] the Emperor of Constantinople, Lord Theodore, called Laskaris.<sup>12</sup>

And he came again to bow to the God-loving Emperor, his *in-law* [my emphasis]. And the Emperor received him with all the imperial honors and spoke with him again alone [. . .].<sup>13</sup>

## 2. BETWEEN NICAEA, CONSTANTINOPLE AND ROME, A. 1250–A. 1274

King Uroš I (1243–1276), the youngest son of Stephen the First-Crowned, and his only son with Anna Dandolo, was often casually portrayed as too

weak to have an autonomous policy in the swiftly changing world of mid-thirteenth-century southeastern Europe, and as the strongest proponent of the "Antibyzantine policy" among the two-hundred-year-long rule of the Nemanjić dynasty in Serbia, especially regarding his half-hearted alliances with the mighty Emperor of Nicaea, John Batatzes.<sup>14</sup> The son of a Venetian princess, married to a Catholic Hungarian princess of Byzantine origin,<sup>15</sup> ousted by his sons in the aftermath of the Church Union of Lyon, and without an official hagiographer to the kind of those his grandfather or his son Milutin had, King Uroš I remains one of the least-known personalities of the Serbian Middle Ages despite his twenty-three-year-long rule.

Given the general lack of sources for his reign, three contemporary evidences—the first two until recently completely overlooked and the third used sparingly—paint a much more nuanced picture of politically cautious but nonetheless a ruler determined to strengthen the ties with the Emperor John Batatzes in Nicaea and, from 1261, Michael VIII Palaiologos in Constantinople.<sup>16</sup>

The first two examples come from the rhetorical eulogies to the Emperor John Batatzes (1222–54) by George Akropolites and Batatzes's son Theodore II Laskaris (ruled 1254–58). Written soon after the John Batatzes's death in 1254, they represent accurate contemporary evidence of both Serbian kings' close alliance with and submission to the late Emperor, and the uncertainty pervading the imperial court in Nicaea regarding the former's loyalty to the new monarch. Praising Batatzes's victories in the West, George Akropolites stresses:

The West entire hugs the Emperor's feet and kneel on their knees calling you the Lord. The Serb borders us at the West, certainly not by himself, he who in words is counted among the Emperor's faithfuls, and submitted to the Emperor as a servant and obliged as his retainer to send him military forces.<sup>17</sup>

In a similar manner, Theodore II Laskaris, a learned successor of the mighty John Batatzes, emphasizes in his eulogy the submission of Serbian King Uroš to his father, likening the Serbian *ethnarch* to a mouse who had once dared to rebel against the Emperor's dominance but was swiftly forced to fall down on the ground and to bow to the shadow of Batatzes's feet.<sup>18</sup>

The third example comes from the imperial edict—a gold-sealed sigillion—of the Emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos from April 1271. Demetrios, otherwise unknown first cousin of the Serbian King Uroš, jumped at the opportunity to get his possessions confirmed by Michael VIII soon after King Uroš struck the political alliance with the Byzantine emperor corroborated by the engagement of the Serbian prince Milutin and the Emperor's small daughter Anna. The Emperor responded affirmatively to his request, stating:



Since the beloved first cousin of the highest king (rex) of Serbia and mine beloved *in-law* [my emphasis], the noblest zhupan Demetrios requested from my imperial highness [. . .].<sup>19</sup>

### 3. TOWARD THE UNION WITH BYZANTINE EMPEROR

For the major part of his life, King Uroš I's second son Milutin—in contemporary sources usually officially named Stephen Uroš II—was on a verge of becoming the Emperor's son-in-law. Born in 1254 when the Latins were still the lords of Constantinople, with the coming of age and soon after he turned fifteen Milutin was betrothed to the daughter of the heroic Emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos, the conqueror of the New Rome from Crusaders' offspring. But the princess Anna's age—she was at least eight and maybe even ten years younger than Milutin—and then another political earthquake that shook the entire region after Michael VIII's Church Union with Rome in 1274, denied the Serbian prince the opportunity to jump in hierarchy over his brother and other relatives through a direct connection with the Byzantine emperor. Nevertheless, the goal was set in Milutin's mind, and once the opportunity presented itself again he was determined not to allow it to slip away again at any cost.<sup>20</sup>

A quarter of a century after the first marriage accord that promised him not only the status of Michael VIII's son-in-law but carried with it the certainty of inheriting the Serbian royal throne, Milutin found himself at the receiving end of the Byzantine offensive in Macedonia, carried out by the generals of Michael VIII's son and three or four years his junior, Emperor Andronikos II Palaiologos. The two of them belonged to two most stable and powerful lines in southeastern Europe; they were both bonded with the wide circle of rulers in the region and beyond, particularly to the ruling families of Bulgaria—where they had confronting interests—Hungary and Mongolian Golden Horde on the northern banks of the Danube; they were both political realists who realized the true strength of their polities and understood the potential advantages of the close political alliance that, as a rule, was most easily achieved through a marriage agreement, as they could both conclude from their own multiple marriages; and, lastly, the earlier connections between the two dynasties were not renewed recently and there was therefore no impediments on account of blood proximity to a new marriage alliance.

The lengthy negotiations, during which the Serbian King's determination for striking an all-encompassing political alliance with Byzantium overcame all obstacles, ended with the ceremony in Thessalonica on 19 April 1299 in which the forty-five-year-old Milutin was wedded to Andronikos II's five-year-old daughter, Simonis. Obviously still remembering the uncertain

character of his first betrothal with another Byzantine princess almost three decades earlier, the Serbian King insisted on a genuine marriage ceremony, forcing the transgression of canonical laws that decreed twelve years as the earliest possible age at which girls can marry. However, there were some important concessions from the Serbian king's side, and by far the most significant one regarded his total and unequivocal "union" with the Empire,<sup>21</sup> as was explicitly stated in the imperial edicts that followed immediately the marriage ceremony, only to be repeated constantly and diligently in the decades to come:

Because the highest King (*kralis*) of Serbia and beloved brother and brother-in-law of my empire, Lord Stephen Uroš came to the union with my empire. . . .

Ἐπεὶ ὁ ὑψηλότατος κράλης Σερβίας καὶ περιτόθητος ἀδελφὸς καὶ γαμβρὸς τῆς βασιλείας μου κύρ Στέφανος ὁ Οὐρεσις ἐλθὼν εἰς ἔνωσιν τῆς βασιλείας μου. . . .<sup>22</sup>

The "union" between the Serbian King Milutin and the Emperor represented the high-point of the Serbian Middle Ages, the point to which two centuries of the rule of the Nemanjić dynasty were leading with a very few political moves in other directions. The importance of the events of 1299, and the King Milutin's definite turn toward Byzantium signifies also the real beginning of the creation of the Serbian empire, as Leonidas Mavromatis had formulated it almost four decades ago. The importance of understanding and correctly reconstructing historical context is exemplified in the change of policy and activities of the same King Milutin after he acquired the status of imperial son-in-law: Although King Milutin is renowned for his intensive church building and church restoring program, he did not commence with these ideologically laden activities before he became the emperor Andronikos II's son-in-law. It was only after the alliance with the Byzantine emperor was established, and after Milutin had made the final choice and turn toward Byzantium, that he embarked on almost imperial *renovatio* of the holy places, situated in the former, or even traditional Byzantine lands.

\* \* \*

Assessing the position of Serbia within the broader Byzantine world by using the notions such as "independence" or understanding the status of Serbian polity as "independent" in the highly personalized and intensively interconnected world of southeastern Europe is highly misleading. Instead of separating Serbia—or any other polity in this region for that matter—from the broader historical contexts and its natural historical surroundings, it would be much more correct and rewarding to analyze the structure and mechanisms of



functioning of a tightly connected and hierarchically organized political elite that dominated the entire Balkans from the twelfth century until the Ottoman conquest.<sup>23</sup> The shifts of power, the usually ephemeral rise of one region and the decline, temporary or longer lasting of the other, were therefore more internal oscillations within a strongly connected and mutually dependant set of polities governed by tightly knit relatives throughout the last centuries of the Middle Ages in southeastern Europe than the constant antagonistic confrontation of the unrelated "independent" self-sufficient states. That is precisely the reason why after 1204 Serbia went the opposite way from the one that would seem "logical," and from the one Bulgaria—for a brief period of time—took: Serbia moved toward closer connections with and, save political autonomy, total inclusion in the Byzantine world.

Serbia in the thirteenth century was not placed somewhere between the East and the West as commonly stated in the predominantly narrow "national" Serbian scholarship. With a changed method of analysis and a correct model for understanding broader historical context at that time, it is clear that Serbia, through the policy of its all-dominant ruling family, remained an integral part of Byzantine world, gaining prominence within this interrelated elite with every generation until reaching a "union" with the Byzantine Emperor at the very end of the thirteenth century. Owing to this new political paradigm—the all-connectivity of the political elite in the Balkans—the centrality of Constantinople in geopolitical sense lost its significance even before 1204, to be emphatically replaced by the regionally dispersed personal centrality of the most powerful members of the ramified imperial clan after the sack of the Byzantine capital by the Crusaders. Diffusion of political power within the broadly understood ruling family—and not "feudalism"—led to a change from the geographical focus on Constantinople to a more personalized system of mutually connected or dependent regional polities—changing political paradigm also from centrism to regionalism with significant consequences for the entire southeastern Europe in the late Middle Ages that was to be united in a single, center-oriented polity only in the second half of the fifteenth century with the completion of Ottoman conquest. Before that time, however, from the early thirteenth century onward, the Balkans were characterized by the strong regionalism with the Byzantine Empire itself—and the later Byzantine polities in Asia Minor and Europe alike—becoming mere regional states with diminishing supremacy over the other Balkan polities that clung more on the ecumenical ideology of the Christian Roman Empire and the spiritual, even of only nominal dominance of the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

That political orientation of Serbia in the thirteenth century never seriously waived from Byzantine dominance in these aspects, but had actively and constantly worked toward stronger inclusion within Byzantine sphere of influence, was a consequence of the bond established firmly between the

Serbian ruling family and the Byzantine imperial household, and the relative dynastic stability in Serbia, in sharp contrast to Bulgaria in the second half of the thirteenth century, whose political orientation changed more quickly and radically depending on the dominant political factors of the specific time period.

The catastrophe of 1204 that shook the vast region of southeastern Europe and the eastern Mediterranean could not root out Serbia's place within the Byzantine world nor sever its generation-long personal ties with the now divided Byzantine imperial clan. By the end of the thirteenth century, Serbia was positioned at the very core of the Byzantine world through the overarching system of the rule of kinsmen established by the Byzantine emperors in that and the previous century.

## NOTES

1. The elements of continuity have been increasingly receiving scholarly attention in the last decade, offering a more balanced and nuanced evaluation of the consequences the Fourth Crusade had on the Byzantine world, the Eastern Mediterranean, and the West; see contributions in the volumes J. Herrin and A. Saint Guillaing (eds.), *Identities and Allegiances in the Eastern Mediterranean after 1204* (Aldershot, 2011) and J. Harris, C. Holmes, and E. Russel (eds.), *Byzantines, Latins, and Turks in the Eastern Mediterranean World after 1150* (Oxford, 2012). However, caution is warranted in order not to discard too easily the profound effect of the capture of Constantinople and the destruction of the Byzantine Empire, or to underestimate the consequences of the events from 1204 for the subsequent historical development of southeastern Europe and the eastern Mediterranean. It should be pointed out that the capture of Constantinople represented both a catastrophe for the Byzantines and Byzantine society (see the remarks of Demetrios Chomatenos, the Archbishop of Ohrid, *Demetrii Chomateni Ponemata Diafora*, ed. G. Prinzing [Berlin–New York, 2002], no. 114, p. 372), and a political earthquake that sparked a multigenerational struggle among the Byzantines for regaining legitimacy as the emperors of the Romans; see D. Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought in Byzantium, 1204–ca. 1330* (Cambridge, 2007).

2. I prefer this term or the phrase "Byzantine sphere of influence" to that of "Byzantine Commonwealth" (coined genially—albeit with too strong an emphasis on "Eastern Europe" and "Orthodoxy") by D. Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth: Eastern Europe, 500–1453* (New York, 1971) which remains controversial and loaded with various modern political implications, even though, when defined correctly and used adequately, it represents a very useful concept for describing and understanding Byzantine long-term policies toward and dominance over the lands that spread in all directions far from the Empire's core territories. See Garth Fowden, *Empire to Commonwealth: Consequences of Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Princeton, NJ, 1993), and, forthcoming, V. Stanković, "The New 'Byzantine Commonwealth': Nicaea and



its Balkan Neighbors" in A. Simpson and P. Pagona (eds.), *The Empire of Nicaea Revisited* (Turnhout).

3. Works on medieval Serbia are very scarce and, as a rule, of depressingly little significance. Still very useful are two overviews of medieval Balkan history by John V. A. Fine, *The Early Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the Sixth to the Late Twelfth Century* (Ann Arbor, 1983), and *The Late Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the Late Twelfth Century to the Ottoman Conquest* (Ann Arbor, 1987); see also F. Curta, *Southeastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 500–1250* (Cambridge, 2006).

4. The same stands for the futile search for causality that serves the teleological narrative and is influenced by both hindsight knowledge and the non-scholarly arguments and inclinations of specific scholars. The lack of understanding of both historical context and the complexity of the problems and relations, as well as the overwhelming resistance to innovative approaches, pervade the scholarship on southeastern Europe and Byzantium itself, hindering the modernization of these scholarly fields; see Chris Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean 400–800* (Oxford–New York, 2005), "Introduction" (a need for creating new paradigms), and idem, *The Inheritance of Rome: A History of Europe from 400 to 1000* (New York, 2009), pp. 11ff (against teleological approach in historiography).

5. K. Jireček, *Geshichte der Serben* (Gotha, 1911, repr. Amsterdam, 1967). Collective work under the indicative title *History of the Serbian Nation (Istorija srpskog naroda)* (Belgrade, 1981) offers just a slightly more "nationally" hued version of Jireček's narrative, with very few exceptions. That Jireček's work, his approach, and his analysis have not been subject of a serious analysis in contemporary scholarship despite its overwhelming influence on the Serbian national historiography is another telling sign of the sad state of Serbian historiography and its isolation from international—both regional and broader—scholarship. For this reason, the case of Serbia has been completely overlooked in studies on modern perceptions of the past and their significance for creation of modern nation states and national identities, especially in the recent volumes of the series *Writing the Nation: National Historiographies and the Making of Nation States in the 19th and 20th Century Europe*, General Editors: S. Berger, Ch. Conrad, and G. P. Marchal: vol. IV, S. Berger and Ch. Lorenz (eds.), *Nationalizing the Past: Historians as Nation Builders in Modern Europe*, (Basingstoke–New York, 2010); vol. VII, R. J. W. Evans and G. P. Marchal (eds.), *The Uses of the Middle Ages in Modern European States: History, Nationhood and the Search for Origins*. The present paper, together with my other titles cited in the notes, represent introductory steps to an overall reevaluation of Serbian Middle Ages that I will offer in *A History of Medieval Serbia*, forthcoming in Brill's series East-Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450–1500. See V. Stanković, "The Character and Nature of Byzantine Influence in Serbia (from the End of the Eleventh to the End of the Thirteenth Century): Reality—Policy—Ideology," in M. Angar and C. Sode (eds.), *Serbia and Byzantium* (Frankfurt am Main, 2013), pp. 75–93.

6. Michael VIII Palaiologos's Church Union with Rome sent shockwaves throughout this region, prompting the changes on Serbian royal throne and a short-termed closer political alliance with Hungary. However, that was just another inter-familial reshuffling of power with the sons of the ousted Serbian king Uroš, older

Dragutin, and younger Milutin, grasping the opportunity to take over the reins of power from their father creating a unique ruling triumvirate with their mother, Queen Jelena, who remained a dominant political presence within Serbian politics and beyond until the very end of the thirteenth century.

7. V. Stanković, "Stronger Than It Appears? Byzantium and Its European Hinterland after the Death of Manuel Komnenos" in A. Simpson (ed.), *The Sad Quarter of the Century? Byzantium 1180–1204* (Athens, 2015), pp. 35–48; see Alicia Simpson's contribution in this volume and idem, "Byzantium and Hungary in the Late Twelfth Century and on the Eve of the Fourth Crusade: Personal Ties and Spheres of Influence," paper presented at International Conference: *Byzantium and the West: Perception and Reality, 12th–15th Century*, (Athens, 5–6 September 2014).

8. J. C. Moore, *Pope Innocent III (1160/1–1216): To Root Up and To Plant* (Leiden–Boston, 2003), pp. 73–5, presents the intensive Papal diplomatic activity in this region, without going deeper into the historical background.

9. The dating of Eudokia's sending off is still problematic. Following closely Choniates's narration it would seem that Stephen opted for alliance with Venice as early as 1201, while his Byzantine father-in-law, Emperor Alexios III Angelos, was still in power (*Nicetae Choniatae Historia*, ed. J.-L. van Dieten (Berlin–New York, 1975), pp. 530–1, and Alicia Simpson's contribution in this volume, especially note 88). Vukan reacted already in 1202 and defeated Stephen (who had to flee to Bulgaria). Stephen's preemptive political turn toward Venice in the years leading to the Fourth Crusade that followed immediately his father's death, at the time when his youngest brother Sava was still away from Serbia at Mount Athos, opens a wide array of questions that need to be addressed in greater detail bearing in mind the contemporary historical context and the realities of the time: There was no cult of St. Simeon as the founder and protector of his lineage; no autonomous Serbian church to celebrate new "national" saint, and certainly not a soul who could fathom that in the coming years the "eternal" Roman Empire would be destructed with New Rome sacked by the crusading troops that shattered the established political order.

10. The two brothers, who were at the same time the first Serbian historiographers composing the Lives of their father St. Simeon, created a very elaborated political and spiritual legacy with Sava's creation of the cult of St. Simeon the Oil-Giver and his translation of St. Simeon's relics back to Serbia to the church of the Dormition of the Virgin in Studenica in 1207, Nemanya's foundation that was finally completed in that year.

11. George Akropolites, *Opera*, 2 vols, ed. A. Heisenberg (Leipzig, 1903; rev. edn. P. Wirth, Stuttgart, 1978), I, p. 9.

12. *Život svetoga Simeuna i svetoga Save napisao Domentijan* [*The Lives of Sts Simeon and Sava written by Domentijan*], ed. Dj. Daničić (Belgrade, 1865), pp. 217. All translations are mine. There are no reliable English translations of Serbian medieval sources available.

13. *Domentijan*, p. 221. The Serbian term for an in-law, "svjat," refers to the relation by affiliation much as the Greek term "συμπένθερος," with which Emperor Alexios III Angelos refers to Serbian great zhupan Stephen Nemanya; *Actes des Chilandar*, I, eds. M. Živojinović, V. Kravari, and Ch. Giros, Archiv de l'Athos XX

(Paris, 1998), no. 4, 107–10 and no. 5, 114–6. I had an opportunity to examine the photographs of the edicts in the Hilandar Research Library at the Ohio State University, for which I express my gratitude to the monks of the Hilandar Monastery and the Hilandar Research Library and to confirm that the reading *συμπένθερος* (as in the edition by L. Petit, *Actes des Chilandar. Première partie: Actes grecs, Vizantijskij Vremnik (Supplementum)* 17 [1911, repr. Amsterdam 1975, no. 4]) should be preferred to that of *συμπενθερος* as in *Actes des Chilandar*; I, p. 107.

14. Jireček, *Geschichte*, pp. 308–26.

15. G. L. McDaniel, "On Hungarian-Serbian Relations in the Thirteenth Century: John Angelos and Queen Jelena," *Ungarn Jahrbuch* 12 (1982–3), pp. 43–50.

16. Stanković, "Character and Nature of Byzantine Influence in Serbia," pp. 90–2.

17. Akropolites, II, p. 18. Akropolites, as many other learned men from twelfth century onwards, refers in his rhetorical works to the Serbs as the "Triballi," using the name of the pre-Roman tribe that roughly inhabited the territory of the medieval Serbia; hence, he calls here Serbian King the "Triball."

18. *Theodorus II Ducas Lascaris Opuscula rhetorica*, ed. A. Tartaglia (Munich-Leipzig, 2000), pp. 26–30.

19. Petit, *Actes des Chilandar*, no. 7, and *Actes des Chilandar*, I, no. 8, pp. 127–8, corroborating the reading "*συμπένθερος*," on which see note 13 above.

20. L. Mavromatis, *La foundation de l'empire serbe. Le kralj Milutin* (Thessalonica, 1978); V. Stanković, *Kralj Milutin [King Milutin]* (Belgrade, 2012).

21. V. Stanković, "Beloved Son-In-Law: Charters of Byzantine Emperors to the Hilandar Monastery after the Marriage of King Milutin to Symonis," *Scripta & e-Scripta* 22 (2013), pp. 57–66.

22. *Actes des Chilandar*, I, no. 18, p. 174.

23. I will present in a greater detail this argument and the system of Byzantine dominance over the Balkans in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in the forthcoming monograph *Creating the Rule of Kinsmen: The Transformation of a Political Paradigm in Southeastern Europe in the 12th and 13th Centuries*, due to be published by Lexington Books.

## Chapter 9

# The Synodicon of Orthodoxy in BAR Ms. S1. 307 and the Hagioriticon Gramma of the Year 1344

Ivan Biliarsky

The main aim of my chapter is to present some observations on the text of a copy of the Synodicon of Orthodoxy, found in the Slavonic manuscript No. 307 (A Triodion and Penticostarion) of the Library of the Romanian Academy. I would like to focus my presentation on two elements of the text, which are unique and are not present in any other known copy of the Synodicon, neither Greek nor Slavic. These are the commemoration of the prelates of Hierissos, and especially that of metropolitan Jacob, on the one hand, and the anathemas against the heretical grouping of Irene Porenè, on the other.

Although the manuscript BAR No. 307 is badly damaged, it is precisely these parts of the text that are relatively well preserved. They are particularly important because they provide certain arguments for the dating of the text as well as for the localizing of its preparation. The manuscript contains 124 paper folios of 215×140 mm. It was in a very bad condition when it underwent a restoration that damaged it even more. Presently some places are illegible due to the material covering the pages. The original end of the manuscript has not been preserved. The watermark is that of a hand holding a flower of the type presumably dated to the first half of the sixteenth century according to the catalogue of Alexandru Mareş.<sup>1</sup>

The leather binding is new (restored). We have only a part of the old binding that is bonded on the new one. In the catalogue of P. P. Panaitescu, published prior to the restoration, the binding is described as old, made of leather with wooden plates, and badly damaged.<sup>2</sup> The script is semi-uncial. It was clear and well legible but is now damaged by time and the restoration. The orthography is of the Resava style, lacking nasal vowels and with two signs for 'yer' (ѣ and ѥ). The frame of the written text measures 155×90–95 mm and contains 23–25 lines per page and 28–35 characters per line. The initial

letters, the numbers and the indication notes are written in red. There is a red and blue tracery decoration on f. 1r. In his catalogue, P. P. Panaitescu indicates a note that does not exist now, because it was written on the inner side of the back cover: Πᾶ ἡ οὐρο ἐμονῆ πὸ Θεωδοσε ἐκ λ' ζ' ς' ς' ς'.<sup>3</sup> The universal year of 7118 corresponds to the year 1609/1610.

The manuscript contains a Triodion and a Pentecostarion that fill almost the entire codex (f. 1–112). The Synodicon is an integral part of the Triodion and occupies ff. 2–20. After f. 20 the text becomes almost illegible. At the end of the manuscript we find the *Vita* of St. Gregory the Decapolite ([Жн] тїє въ кратцѣхъ прїбнаѣ ѿца на / [ше] го рї грї гора декаполїта. бѣ въ ѿ: ~ ... ѿ мже прїбныи ѿ бгѣ ... їе жїзнь положїи ѿ пользно.). Evidently, this is the sole copy of this text by Ignatius Diakonos that has survived today, and it will be the object of particular scholarly attention on the part of the author of this article.<sup>4</sup> What follows, up to the end of the codex, is an almost illegible text (f. 124).

The first element under consideration is presented on f. 20v: Нѣ фонѣ ѿ іакѡвѣ въ сїѣ цї єннїмъ / архїєрїє ѿ ѿрїшскїхъ ѿ тїє го рѣ, / въ чїнаа пѣмї. This is the memory of bishop Niphon and metropolitan Jacob, mentioned as "prelates of Hierissos and the Holy Mountain."<sup>5</sup> This text offers slightly more concrete data about the time and the location of production of the protograph. As far as we know, the bishopric of Hierissos is not cited in any variant or copy of the Synodicon, neither Greek nor Slavic. Although Hierissos was not a major church center it is quite well documented because of its position on the Chalkidike peninsula and proximity to Mount Athos. The small town of Hierissos is mentioned in the oldest surviving Hagiorite document—the sigillion of Basil I of 883 AD—and as a bishopric already in 982 AD.<sup>6</sup> Even after the founding of the diocese, the Holy Mountain was not under its jurisdiction but remained under direct authority of the emperor. As a result, the bishops of Hierissos and the monastic republic were often caught in the struggle for power and revenues. After the catastrophe of 1204, the bishopric prevailed and in a document dated about 1240 we find for the first time the title "Bishop of Hierissos and the Holy Mountain" (ἐπίσκοπος Ἱερισσοῦ καὶ Ἁγίου Ὄρους). It replaced the simple "Bishop of Hierissos" (ἐπίσκοπος Ἱερισσοῦ)—a formula that becomes standard from the mid-thirteenth century onward.<sup>7</sup> A similar formula is found in the manuscript from Bucharest.

The text mentions "*archierei* (prelates) of Hierissos" without any specification of their degree in the Episcopal category. This is due to the fact that one of them (Niphon) is a bishop while the other (Jacob) is the only metropolitan of Hierissos in the Middle Ages.<sup>8</sup> This type of citation of the representatives of the see of this small town on Chalkidike is not an exception. We find almost the same—ὁ ἐπρωτάτος ἀρχιερεὺς Ἱερισσοῦ—even in official Greek

texts, such as, for example, a Synodal act from 1350.<sup>9</sup> Both mentioned prelates are testified in different documents of the period. Niphon presided over the bishopric see in the 1320s and 1330s: The first testimony about him is found in a document of May 1325 (in January 1323 bishop was still his predecessor Theodosius) and the last one is from October 1330, but obviously he continued to occupy the see some years after that date.<sup>10</sup> Apparently, his successor was the metropolitan Jacob, who will be in the center of our interest. He held the see from about 1334 until his death at the end of 1366. This influential person was important not only in matters of Church but also in matters of politics of the Empire during this difficult period. He was the main representative of the *Rhomaioi* in Eastern Macedonia in a period of Serbian domination over this area under Tsar Stephen Dušan and later under Despot John Uglješa. It was precisely that personal authority of Jacob that resulted in the promotion of that see to metropolitan rank in his lifetime. His influence in Athonite circles was considerable. A number of sources testify of Jacob's involvement as arbiter or judge in the Hagioritic affairs; he participated in the promotion and *cheirotoniai* in the monastic community; he owned a special *kathisma* in Karyai, where he sojourned regularly; and he participated in the spiritual and organizational life of the Holy Mountain trying to counterbalance the Serbian power embodied in the Protaton and some other internal institutions of the monastic republic.<sup>11</sup>

It should be noted that, except for Niphon and Jacob, we have no mention of any other prelate of Hierissos in the manuscript from Bucharest. This is not a result of the damage of the manuscript on that particular page, because the text continues without any *lacunae*, which suggests that the original may have been written shortly after the death of metropolitan Jacob at the end of 1366 and probably on Mount Athos. We can corroborate this conclusion when we compare the cited mentioning of the prelate to other data about the events of the period in question and in particular those related to the activity of the heretics during the 1340s.

In 1344 a General Assembly of the monastic community took place on Mount Athos and its decisions against the heretical grouping of Irene Porenè are cited in the copy of the Synodicon of Orthodoxy of BAR Ms. Sl. 307 (ff. 15v8–16r21). Metropolitan Jacob presided over the Assembly and this is the main reason his name is commemorated in the text in question. It is our impression that the Greek original of the text was prepared exactly in order to add these dogmatic and disciplinary decisions to the Palaeologian variant of the Synodicon that had been prepared some years earlier—in the early 1340s—in relation to the Hesychast controversy that had shaken the Empire. We owe the identification of the text of these decisions to Antonio Rigo, who dedicated a special book to the problem of struggles between the Bogomils and the Hesychast monks in Mount Athos, based on the so-called





place in that year at the height of the controversy between the hesychasts and barlaamites. The focus of the deliberations of the General Assembly is the condemnation of the heretical group of Irene Porenè that penetrated into the Holy Mountain and infected some of the Hagiorite monasteries. These were the so-called "Bogomils" or "Messalians." It should be stressed that in the beginning both leading antipalamites—Barlaam of Calabria and Gregory Akindynos—accused the hesychasts of cooperating with them. Consequently, the Athonite monks responded to these reproaches by condemnation of the beliefs and practices of the "Bogomils," banishing them from entering Mount Athos. This decision was embodied in the now lost so-called *Tomos eggraphos* (Τόμος ἔγγραφος). Its content was preserved in the cited *Hagioriticon Gramma* and the Slavic text of the Synodicon from Bucharest.<sup>16</sup>

The later events are known from the Life of St. Theodosius of Tărnovo.<sup>17</sup> Some of the heretics moved to Tărnovo, the capital city of Bulgaria, and continued their activity in new surroundings. We do not know how they arrived in this part of the Balkans but Bulgaria was obviously strongly immersed into the cultural developments and religious confrontations that pervaded the contemporary Byzantine world. Tărnovo was an important political, cultural, and religious hub of the region and a home for many different religious ideas, some of them quite distant from official Orthodoxy. As a result of efforts undertaken by St. Theodosius, these heresies were condemned and the heretics expelled from Bulgaria by authorities, some of their leaders even punished and mutilated. It is, nevertheless, safe to say that the entire area of southeastern Europe was deeply engaged with the ongoing religious controversy at that time.

We know about the accusation against the hesychasts to be in relation to the sect of Irene Porenè from the writings of Barlaam of Calabria, from epistles of Gregory Akindynos as well as from the antiheretical polemics and "*Historia Byzantina*" of Nikephoros Gregoras. All three of them are eminent members of the antipalamite "party" but their accusations are quite different in tone and scope. Barlaam focused on the hesychast doctrine and its eventual relations to the already condemned heretical teachings.<sup>18</sup> Gregory Akindynos and Nikephoros Gregoras were more personal: They tried to discover some real or alleged and presumed personal relations of the hesychast leaders to the heretics, called Bogomils or Messalians. Gregory Akindynos—being a former disciple of St. Gregory Palamas—restricted his attacks to the Patriarch Isidore Bouchiras. In his letter to the metropolitan of Monemvasia, he wrote that during his sojourn in Thessalonica, Joseph of Crete—one of the leading members of the Irene Porenè group—lived in the home of Isidore, whom he directly accused of being associated with her heresy.<sup>19</sup> Nikephoros Gregoras directed his condemnation directly against Palamas, whom he accused of

being the key to the cooperation between the hesychasts and the heretics.<sup>20</sup> It is obvious that the anti-palamite grouping tried to accuse their opponents of being implicated in the heretical deviations and practices of the sect that had been condemned in 1344. It is not clear, however, whether there ever was any real involvement or if the accusers simply used the current Bogomil-Messalian cliché to attack the opponents. We can only say that the condemnation of the sect of Irene Porenè took place at the time of removal of Isidore Bouchiras from the see of Monembasia and the excommunication of Gregory Palamas. It should be noted also that the sect was active in the same region as the hesychasts—Thessalonica and Mount Athos.<sup>21</sup> The reproaches of personal contacts are well known and we cannot avoid mentioning the complete and strange silence of Patriarch Philotheus Kokkinos and of Gregory Palamas on this topic. Some other representatives of the hesychast movement did, however, participate actively in the condemnation of the Irene Porenè's grouping and in its banishment, on Mount Athos as well as, subsequently, in Tărnovo.<sup>22</sup> The future Patriarch Kallistos I was involved in the trial of Athonite heretics and later in the capital city of Bulgaria the same happened under the jurisdiction of St. Theodosius of Tărnovo, a disciple of St. Gregory of Sinai, whose Life was written by the same Patriarch Kallistos, his close friend.

In my opinion, accusations of involvement with the heretical sect of Irene Porenè were used as ideological cliché to question the tenets of the hesychast movement in the controversies of that period. The labels "Bogomils" or "Messalians" are used as an ideological weapon in the fourteenth century and we have no evidence that the Palamites were affiliated to these heresies. In all truthfulness, we have no evidence whether the sect of Irene Porenè was either "Bogomil" or "Messalian" at all. The general character of these denunciations is indirectly confirmed by other formulae of dogmatic deviations, used both in *Hagioriticon Gramma* and in the Synodicon's copy from Bucharest, namely:

1. Iconoclasm (f. 15v, l. 18–21).<sup>23</sup> Accusations of iconoclastic heresy are among the most typical in the post-iconoclast time, from 843 onward. They are quite well presented in the sources in regard to the Bogomils and the other neomanichaeian and neognostic sects. Admittedly, these claims conform to the fourteenth-century heretical teachings in a measure they are known to us. In spite of this condemnatory cliché, we have to note the complete concurrence of the accusations against the heretics in the *Hagioriticon Gramma* and in the Bucharest copy of the Synodicon: they refer to the holy icons as only wood and mud, they spit upon the images, dishonor, and burn them (f. 15v, l. 20–21).<sup>24</sup>
2. The heretics deny the Holy Baptism and the Eucharistic communion (f. 15v, l. 22–25). This is an especially important passage of the *Hagioriticon*

*Gramma* and Antonio Rigo in his article paid a particular attention to it, adducing some older parallels of similar accusations, very typical for the condemnation of the dualist neomanichaean heresies.<sup>25</sup> Practically the same phrases of accusations were used in both texts, which points toward a direct relation between them.

3. They deny the Incarnation (f. 16a, 1. 1–3).<sup>26</sup> Undoubtedly, this is a characteristic accusation against the dualistic heresies, based on their denial of the flesh.
4. They deny the resurrection in body of the dead at the End of Days (f. 16r 1. 3–5)—a common accusation used frequently against the heretics at this time and we find it in the *Hagioriticon Gramma*, in the Bucharest Synodicon, as well as in other sources of that time. It is also based on the denial of the flesh.<sup>27</sup>
5. The heretics practice dirty rituals and disseminate false superstitions—for this, there is no concretization in the Synodicon of Bucharest (f. 16a, 1. 5–8). A parallel study of both texts could at this point indicate this to be an accusation of dogmatic and moral character which is present in both the Synodicon as well as in the *Hagioriticon gramma* of 1344. We should also list here the heretics' neglecting of the fasts, consummation of impure food (flesh of dead animals as well as of those prohibited by the orthodox Christian teachings), sodomy, homosexual relations, orgiastic rituals, unclean material bearer for Eucharistic communion (the usage of urine of the teacher for the communion of his disciples), and so forth.<sup>28</sup>
6. They are accused of Bogomilism or Messalianism.

The following persons are condemned and anathemized (see f. 15v):

1. Joseph of Crete.<sup>29</sup> Except for his Cretan origins, we know nothing about Joseph's early life. Together with George of Larissa, he was a teacher of the sect and occupied a higher position compared to the others, except Irene Porenè. From the accusation of Gregory Akindynos against Isidore Bouchiras, we learn a few details about Joseph from the time of his stay in Thessalonica, when he already was a member of the heretical group of Irene Porenè. Later, he entered Mount Athos and dwelled in the Great Lavra of St. Athanasius. Joseph of Crete is one of those who introduced the sect in the monastic community. Thus, the Great Lavra became the center of the heresy in the Holy Mountain. He was later condemned by the Athonite General Assembly and expelled from the monastic republic.
2. George of Larissa.<sup>30</sup> He is mentioned in the anathema as one of the teachers and initiators of the heretical group on Mount Athos. George was a monk in the Great Lavra in the early 1340s. Nikephoros Gregoras

reported that he originated from Larissa in Thessaly. Before going to Mount Athos, he was in Thessalonica and probably dwelled in the same monastery with Joseph of Crete, who introduced him in the heretical faction. A text of his confession had come down to us, from which we find out that he repented during the General Assembly of Athonite monks asking for forgiveness, but that he was, nonetheless, expelled from the monastic republic being first punished and iron branded so that his heresy would become apparent to all.

Cyril, mentioned in the Synodicon, should be identified as Cyril Bossotà, cited in the *Hagioriticon Gramma* and in the Life of St. Theodosius of Tărnovo.<sup>31</sup> He was a monk in the Great Lavra and was tried and expelled from Mount Athos on account of his heresy. According to the narrative of the Life of St. Theodosius by Patriarch Kallistos, he moved to Tărnovo and continued to teach there. Testimonies of his activity in the Bulgarian capital city are quite similar to those related to his life on Mount Athos. He was condemned by the Council of Tărnovo and was mutilated (iron branded) and expelled from Bulgaria.

Dionysius, probably a monk from the Great Lavra, not identifiable by other sources. The sole mentions of him are found in the *Hagioriticon Gramma* and in the Bucharest copy of the Synodicon of Orthodoxy. He was a brother of the *papas* Niphon who was expelled from the monastery in 1359 together with five of his disciples for causing trouble and provoking conflicts.<sup>32</sup>

Moses the Zograph<sup>33</sup> is mentioned with his vocation—he was probably a painter and iconographer. This fact is hardly consistent with the iconoclastic attitudes of the heretical group and it could mean that the charge of iconoclasm was little more than a cliché used in the theological discussions of the time. A. Rigo presumed Moses was a monk in the Hilandar monastery or in Hilandar's *pirgos* at the seashore. If we accept this identification, Moses could in all probability be identified as a person of Serbian origin.

Methodius, probably identical with a certain *bashta* of the monastery of Hilandar, the latter being brother of the monk Theophilus of the Great Lavra.<sup>34</sup> It is probable that he was the spiritual father<sup>35</sup> of Hilandar or of the Hilandar's *pirgos* at the shore. This was a relatively high position in the Hagioritic hierarchy that testifies not only about the influence of Methodius himself but also about the high level which the heretical group infiltrated. The eventual influence of the *bashta* surpassed the limits of Mount Athos and had also political dimensions since the spiritual father of Hilandar was usually at the same the spiritual father of the kings of Serbia. Such identification presupposes a Serbian origin of Methodius, the assertion that could be supported by the use of the South Slavic word

*bashta*—meaning “father”—to designate his position. Nevertheless, it must be noted that this word is closer to the Bulgarian than the Serbian language, although we find it in usage among the western group of the Southern Slaves as well.<sup>36</sup>

7. Malachias<sup>37</sup> should be identical with a homonymous monk, cited in the *Hagioriticon Gramma* as *ecclesiastikos of Ivron*. He had a relatively high position in Ivron that occupied and still occupies third or second rank among the monasteries of the Holy Mountain. Nothing else is known about him. In the acts of Ivron we find only two monks called Malachia for the entire period stretching from 1328 to the beginning of the sixteenth century but neither of them could be identified with the one mentioned in the *Hagioriticon Gramma*: one is a hieromonk in 1419 and the other a *kathegoumenos* in 1501 and 1503.<sup>38</sup>
8. Theophilus<sup>39</sup> was a monk from the Great Lavra, brother of the so-called *bashta* (the latter probably identical with the one mentioned in the anathema Methodius). This would mean that he was of Serbian origin, too. We do not know anything else about his life after his condemnation by the General Assembly of Athos.
9. Chariton<sup>40</sup> was a monk in the Great Lavra and very sparsely presented in the sources. We know only that he was a member of the heretical grouping of Joseph of Crete and was sentenced by the Athonite General Assembly in 1344.
10. Theodorete<sup>41</sup> is mentioned in both the *Hagioriticon gramma* and the Synodicon from Bucharest. According to one hypothesis, he is identical with the homonymous heretic cited in the Life of St. Theodosius of Tarnovo, but this identification has been strongly contested and remains just a speculation.<sup>42</sup>
11. Nicandros<sup>43</sup> is mentioned twice in the *Hagioriticon Gramma* and once in the Bucharest copy of the Synodicon. He was one of the convicted and anathemized members of the Athonite heretical grouping. Nothing else is known about him.
12. Irene Porene<sup>44</sup> is usually classified as “nun” and founder of the sect as well as initiator of its orgiastic practices in Thessalonica, where she dwelled in the 1330s. During the trial and conviction of the heretical grouping by the General Assembly in 1344, she was still in the second city of the Empire. She is regarded as the predominant figure in the Messalian/Bogomil sect and mentor of Joseph of Crete, who was her disciple.
13. Metrophan,<sup>45</sup> the only person mentioned solely in the Synodicon but not in the *Hagioriticon Gramma*. He is one of the convicted Athonite heretics but we cannot assert anything more about him.
14. Ioanikius Kekratimenos (Ἰωάννης ἐκκράτιμνος)<sup>46</sup> is cited in the both texts but one cannot say anything more about him except that

he belonged to the heretical sect and was condemned by the General Assembly in 1344.

In conclusion, we can say that the copy of the Synodicon of Orthodoxy from Bucharest presents us with some important data about the theological controversies in the Eastern Church in the mid-fourteenth century. It is a very important source that testifies both of the development of this essential ecclesiastical text on the eve of the Ottoman conquest and of its fate, not only in the Empire but also among the Slavic peoples. This copy offers proof of the existence of the Palaiologan variant of the Synodicon in South Slavic translation. The manuscript is of crucial importance for the study of diffusion of the text of the Synodicon of Orthodoxy in Romanian lands, together with some other texts that had a special destiny in the principalities of Wallachia and of Moldavia after the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans.

## NOTES

1. A1. Mareş, *Filigranele hîrtiei întrebuintate în ţările române în secolul al XVI-lea* (Bucharest, 1987), p. xxxii, figs. 1608–1625, p. 415. We were not able to find exactly the same watermark in the catalogue, but Alexandru Mareş—undoubtedly the leading specialist on the watermarks in Wallachia and Moldavia—in a personal communication confirmed that the paper cannot be dated to the second half of the sixteenth century. I would like to express my gratitude to this eminent scholar for his help.
2. P. P. Panaitescu, *Catalogul manuscriselor slavo-române şi slave din Biblioteca Academiei Române*, Volume 2 (Bucharest, 2003), no. 307, p. 48.
3. Panaitescu, *Catalogul*, no. 307, p. 48.
4. This is probably the unique copy of the Slavic translation of the large Vita of St. Gregory Decapolite and I am preparing its edition that should appear in the near future. The Greek original was published twice: F. Dvornik, *La Vie de Saint Grégoire le Décapolite et les Slaves macédoniennes au IX siècle* (Paris, 1926), pp. 45–75; G. Makris, *Ignatios Diakonos und die Vita des Hl. Gregorios Dekapolites* (Stuttgart–Leipzig, 1997), pp. 56–153.
5. BAR, Ms. SI. 307, f. 20v.
6. D. Papachryssanthou, “Histoire d’un évêché byzantin: Hiérissos en Chalcidique,” *Travaux et Mémoire* 8 (1981), p. 374.
7. Papachryssanthou, “Hiérissos en Chalcidique,” pp. 376ff.
8. It should be noted that Hierissos became again a metropolitan see in the sixteenth century: D. Papachryssanthou, “Hiérissos, métropole éphémère au XIVe siècle,” *Travaux et Mémoire* 4 (1970), p. 401, note 53.
9. F. Miklosich and I. Müller, *Acta et diplomata graeca sacra et profana*, vol. 14: *Acta Patriarchatus Constantinopolitani MCCCXV–MCCCCII* (Vienna, 1860), no. 133, p. 296.
10. Papachryssanthou, “Hiérissos en Chalcidique,” pp. 391–2.

11. Papachryssanthou, "Hiérissos, métropole éphémère," pp. 395–410; Papachryssanthou, "Hiérissos en Chalcidique," pp. 392–3.
12. A. Rigo, *Monaci esicasti e monaci bogomili. Le accuse di messalianismo e bogomilismo rivolte agli esicasti ed il problema dei rapporti tra esicismo e bogomilismo* (Florence, 1989).
13. A. Rigo, "L'assemblea generale atonita del 1344 su un gruppo di monaci bogomili (ms. Vat. Gr. 604 ff. 11r–12v)," *Cristianesimo nella storia*, 5 (1984), p. 505, 11, 31–56.
14. The condemnation and expulsion of the heretics from Mount Athos is mentioned in the Life of St. Theodosius, written by Patriarch Kallistos, ed. V. N. Zlatarsky, "Житие и жизнь преподобного отца нашего Теодосија иже в Тр'нове поснич'ствовавшего, с'писано свет'ящим патриархом Константина града к'р Калистом" [Life and Deeds of Our Blessed Father Theodosius And His Ascesis in T'arnovo, Written by His Holiness the Patriarch of the Constantine's City, kyr Kallistos], *Sbornik za narodni umotvoreniya i narodopis, book II (XX)*, (Sofia, 1904) pp. 19–20; *Stara b'lgarska literatura*, vol. IV, ed. K. I. Ivanova (Sofia, 1986), pp. 452–3.
15. A. Rigo, "L'assemblea generale atonita," pp. 504–6; Zlatarsky (ed.), "Житие," pp. 1–41.
16. A. Rigo, "L'assemblea generale atonita," p. 480.
17. Zlatarsky (ed.), "Житие," pp. 19 ff; *Stara b'lgarska literatura*, pp. 452ff.
18. Rigo, *Monaci esicasti e monaci bogomili*, pp. 39–103, 221–2.
19. *Letters of Gregory Akindynos*, Greek Text and English Translation by A. Constantinidis Hero (Washington, D.C., 1983), no. 52, 11, 55–75; Rigo, *Monaci esicasti e monaci bogomili*, pp. 151, 221ff, 232–3.
20. Rigo, *Monaci esicasti e monaci bogomili*, pp. 224ff, 232–3.
21. Rigo, *Monaci esicasti e monaci bogomili*, pp. 235ff, 257ff.
22. Zlatarsky (ed.), "Житие," pp. 19ff; *Stara b'lgarska literatura*, pp. 452ff; Rigo, *Monaci esicasti e monaci bogomili*, pp. 269ff.
23. Rigo, "L'assemblea generale atonita," pp. 486–7; Rigo, *Monaci esicasti e monaci bogomili*, pp. 198–200, 248–54. We find the same accusation of iconoclasm in the Life of St. Theodosius of Tarnovo: Zlatarsky (ed.), "Житие," pp. 21–2; *Stara b'lgarska literatura*, pp. 454–5.
24. Rigo, "L'assemblea generale atonita," pp. 504–50, especially lines 35–37.
25. Rigo, "L'assemblea generale atonita," p. 486; Rigo, *Monaci esicasti e monaci bogomili*, p. 200.
26. Rigo, "L'assemblea generale atonita," p. 486; Rigo, *Monaci esicasti e monaci bogomili*, pp. 190ff.
27. Rigo, "L'assemblea generale atonita," p. 486; Rigo, *Monaci esicasti e monaci bogomili*, p. 201.
28. Antonio Rigo studied in detail these accusations in his book about the controversy; A. Rigo, *Monaci esicasti e monaci bogomili*, pp. 193–8.
29. Rigo, "L'assemblea generale atonita," pp. 484; Rigo, *Monaci esicasti e monaci bogomili*, pp. 156ff, 178ff.
30. Rigo, "L'assemblea generale atonita," p. 483 ff.; Rigo, *Monaci esicasti e monaci bogomili*, pp. 135ff, 178ff, 221ff.

31. Rigo, "L'assemblea generale atonita," p. 484; Rigo, *Monaci esicasti e monaci bogomili*, pp. 144–5, 149, 172–8, 179ff, 269; Zlatarsky (ed.), "Житие," pp. 19–22; *Stara b'lgarska literatura*, pp. 452–5.
32. Rigo, *Monaci esicasti e monaci bogomili*, p. 183, note 93.
33. Rigo, "L'assemblea generale atonita," p. 484; Rigo, *Monaci esicasti e monaci bogomili*, pp. 178ff.
34. Rigo, *Monaci esicasti e monaci bogomili*, pp. 178ff, see especially p. 179, note 79, quoting M. Živojinović's opinion that the identification, proposed by Rigo, cannot be but hypothetical.
35. M. Živojinović, "The spiritual father of the monastery of Chilandar," *JÖB* 32/2 (1982), pp. 247–256.
36. *B'lgarski etimologičen rechnik*, vol. I (Sofia, 1971), p. 37; *Rečnik srpskohrvatskog književnog i narodnog jezika*, book I (Belgrade, 1959), pp. 356–7 (the first cited connotation is "father," the second is "older relative," and the third one that is especially notable is "elder in the Chilandar monastery").
37. Rigo, "L'assemblea generale atonita," pp. 483, 485; Rigo, *Monaci esicasti e monaci bogomili*, pp. 144–5, 173–4, 178ff.
38. *Actes d'Iviron*, t. IV, eds. J. Lefort, N. Oikonomidès, D. Papachryssanthou, V. Kravari, and H. Métrévél (Paris, 1995), p. 235.
39. Rigo, "L'assemblea generale atonita," p. 485; Rigo, *Monaci esicasti e monaci bogomili*, pp. 144–5, 173ff, 178ff.
40. Rigo, "L'assemblea generale atonita," p. 485; Rigo, *Monaci esicasti e monaci bogomili*, pp. 144–5, 173ff, 178ff.
41. Rigo, "L'assemblea generale atonita," p. 484; Rigo, *Monaci esicasti e monaci bogomili*, pp. 125 and note 85, 144–5, 173ff, 178ff.
42. Zlatarsky (ed.), "Житие," p. 19; *Stara b'lgarska literatura*, p. 452. In the "Life," Theodore is named separately from the grouping of Irene Porenè (its "Bulgarian" party comprised only of Cyril Bossotà, Lazar, and the priest Stephan) leaving the impression that he was not one of its members. His deviation is presented in a manner which puts it very close to some pagan practices, such as worship of an oak by blood sacrifices and so forth.
43. Rigo, *Monaci esicasti e monaci bogomili*, pp. 144–5, 173–4, 179ff.
44. Rigo, "L'assemblea generale atonita," p. 484; Rigo, *Monaci esicasti e monaci bogomili*, pp. 181ff; *Letters of Gregory Akindynos*, no. 52; Zlatarsky (ed.), "Житие," pp. 19–20; *Stara b'lgarska literatura*, pp. 452–3.
45. Rigo, *Monaci esicasti e monaci bogomili*, pp. 144–5, 179.
46. Rigo, "L'assemblea generale atonita," p. 483; Rigo, *Monaci esicasti e monaci bogomili*, pp. 135ff, 156ff.



## Chapter 10

# Mount Athos and the Byzantine-Slavic Tradition in Wallachia and Moldavia after the Fall of Constantinople

Radu G. Păun

It has been observed that Wallachian and Moldavian relations with Mount Athos first started in the context of rapidly declining Byzantine imperial power and growing Ottoman influence in European politics.<sup>1</sup> The Southern Slavic Orthodox states, faced with Turkish incursions and conquest, were constrained by divergent interests, at a time when the principalities north of the Danube were just beginning to enter the political and cultural orbit of the Byzantine Commonwealth.

It was in this context that the first Wallachian contacts were established with Mount Athos, known in the sources as "the Theotokos' Garden on Earth." The *protos* Chariton proposed to the Princes Nicolae Alexandru (1352–1364) and Vladislav-Vlaicu (1364–1377) that they become new *ktetors* of the "holy and imperial" monastery of Koutloumousiou, thereby inviting them to join the Orthodox "family of rulers" led by the Byzantine *basileus*.<sup>2</sup> Vladislav-Vlaicu duly understood that "it would be wise for My Majesty to do this in turn, as the other rulers, namely Bulgarians, Serbs, Russians and Georgians, have already done" for the salvation of their souls and to honor "the marvellous and Holy Mountain, the holy place which is the eye of the whole Universe" (τῷ ὀφθαλμῷ ὡς εἰπεῖν ἅπασης τῆς οἰκουμένης).<sup>3</sup>

The following decades brought dramatic changes to the map of the region. The fall of the last Bulgarian kingdom at the close of the fourteenth century was followed, some sixty years later, by the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople and of the Serbian despotate, leaving the Danubian principalities in a unique situation as the only free Orthodox states left in South-East Europe. On the other hand, these events put an end to the policy of political and matrimonial alliance in the Orthodox world, which both dynasties, the Wallachian one in particular, had followed since the mid-fourteenth century.<sup>4</sup>

Thus just over a century after the two principalities came into being, their integration into the Byzantine Orthodox polity came to a halt. What seems certain however is that even with the cessation of direct political ties, other forms of cultural integration continued with an influx of scholars and artists northward across the Danube, bringing with them the South Slavic version of the Byzantine model of culture they knew well. Nikodemus the Serb, founder of the Vodița and Tismana monasteries under the political patronage of Prince Lazar himself,<sup>5</sup> is one example, as are some disciples of Patriarch Efthymy of Târnovo.<sup>6</sup> I believe we must accept that Bulgarian and Serbian political and cultural experience was much closer to hand for Moldavian and Wallachian social actors, and more legible, than that of imperial Constantinople, which over the last century had lived a long series of military defeats and harsh doctrinal polemics. The shared cultural and religious language (Church Slavonic) facilitated a process of cultural communication, the successive phases and concrete aspects of which should be reevaluated in the light of recent research.

Our premise here is thus that Byzantine culture arrived north of the Danube, where political and ecclesiastical structures were just taking shape, at the very moment when Byzantium itself was showing signs of political exhaustion. Whether directly (especially in ecclesiastic matters) or indirectly, through Greek or South Slavic channels, the cultural ideology and practices of the Byzantine sphere played a decisive role in shaping the medieval Wallachian and Moldavian states. Further research is needed on how far this cultural capital assumed forms in the two principalities, and a certain dose of caution is required in interpreting various aspects of what we often rather carelessly call the Byzantine "legacy" or "tradition."<sup>7</sup> Events, images, phrases, and symbols may all, often enough, have different meanings and significance in different contexts. Thus, for example, systematic research is needed to contextualize the history and usage of the double-headed eagle, as the only way to elucidate this symbol's meanings, imperial or otherwise, in the Byzantine and post-Byzantine world.<sup>8</sup> Conversely, some elements retained their original character and meaning even in South Slavic dress. This is the case, for instance, with the *Panegyric* upon Constantine the Great written by Patriarch Efthymy of Târnovo. Although written in a Bulgarian context and dedicated to Tsar Ivan Šišman (1371–1393), the text's message is universal, since Constantine was the model ruler *par excellence* in medieval Christendom.<sup>9</sup>

The same difficulties arise in the case of Wallachian and Moldavian ties with Mount Athos, all the more so since these links began at a time when the Byzantine institutional framework was crumbling in the face of a reality so different from what had come before that it shocked contemporaries more than just once. This being so, we must make the necessary observation that the fates of the Empire itself and of Holy Mountain did not follow the

same chronology. For the Athonites, the Ottoman era began much earlier.<sup>10</sup> By 1453, two or even three generations of monks had already lived under Ottoman rule, and were just as used to the new system as Greek-speaking secular elites in areas that had been Ottoman provinces since the mid-fourteenth century.<sup>11</sup> This means neither more nor less (though often it is seen to mean less) than that these social actors were already integrated into a system whose rules and practices they knew and followed. On the other hand, as I have indicated, here we are dealing with social actors (Wallachian and Moldavian princes) whose *direct* access to the Byzantine imperial ethos was limited and whose experience of dealing with the new Ottoman system in place in the Balkans was yet more precarious.<sup>12</sup>

In this new context, it is quite natural that when the Athonite monks asked Wallachian and Moldavian princes for material support, they should emphasize the desperate state of the houses of God in which they lived. At least some of this rhetoric was fairly quickly adopted by the princes themselves, as proven by the charters they granted to the holy places on Mount Athos. In both cases, the main argument appears to be that the demise of the "old founders and protectors, the holy and most faithful princes, kings, and emperors" left the monasteries without help or support. Furthermore, "the diminution of the true faith" had led to the inexorable ruin of many holy places. Immediate intervention was thus required, so that the princes, moved by their sense of charity and love for the true faith, hastened to help the houses of God. As these quotations indicate, the Athonites ascribed to the Wallachian and Moldavian princes a *mission* which they in turn fully agreed to undertake, for the remission of their own sins,<sup>13</sup> but also, importantly, for the preservation of the true faith in a world that had to live under the power of the "Infidels."<sup>14</sup> Such discourse calls to mind the language used by Gennadios Scholarios, first Ecumenical Patriarch under Ottoman rule, who lamented the disappearance of the Christian Empire and Ottoman dominion over the Church, insisting that from now onwards the chief goal for all Orthodox peoples should be to preserve the true faith at whatever cost and by whatever means.<sup>15</sup>

All this rhetoric borrows elements of the Byzantine lexicon and expresses it through the Southern Slavic experience; although this is unsurprising in the context set out above, other aspects deserve closer attention. First of all I must point out how very few princely charters of donation to the Athonite monasteries survive from before 1480. We know of only three from Moldavia, all for the monastery of Zographou.<sup>16</sup> There are even fewer from Wallachia; aside from those granted to Koutloumousiou, there only survives Alexandru Aldea's donation, also to Zographou (1433).<sup>17</sup> Certainly this paucity of evidence may be due to loss of documents over time. Yet this explanation would be too simple on its own.

I believe that a clearer view of the matter may be achieved through a comparative survey of deeds granted to the monastery of Koutloumousiou on the one hand and those granted to the other Athonite monasteries, on the other. The body of evidence here consists of six deeds of donation granted to Koutloumousiou and a further seven to the other monasteries of Athos, from the start of relations down to and including the reign of Neagoe Basarab (1512–1521).<sup>18</sup>

We should note at the onset that no other Athonite monastery received donations of moveable property from Wallachia, or of estates and incomes derived thence; Koutloumousiou is the exception. Further, we may remark that the formulary for donations to Koutloumousiou is practically identical to that used for local monasteries; more precisely—and this is of great importance—it contains a threat of spiritual sanction (a malediction)<sup>19</sup> and calls upon members of the princely Council as witnesses. A document following this formulary thereby has the binding force of law, obliging not just the donor to observe the deed but also all those who succeed him to the throne, regardless of their lineage. This obligation is strengthened by the boyars of the Council as witnesses, as was also the practice when estates were granted to lay recipients or when the prince granted donations of various kinds to monasteries and churches within the principality. The situation is illustrated by the constant use of the phrase “the monastery of Our Lordship” (*монастырь господства нашего*) in the text of the charters of donation (or confirmation), clearly indicating a relationship of patronage if not of outright ownership, which links the ruling power to the monastery in each case. One convincing proof for this idea is the relatively late but nevertheless significant mention in the charters that the monastery was restored and made a “foundation of Wallachia” (*хитупорто ест его съделав Земли Влашки*) by Prince Mircea the Older (cel Bătrân, 1386–1418).<sup>20</sup> Further, the deed that Vladislav-Vlaicu granted to Koutloumousiou in 1369, which had the force of a *typikon*, gives a clear image of the nature of ties between the prince and his foundation. In his role as “lord and *ktetor* (*οικοκυριος και κτήτορος*) of this monastery,”<sup>21</sup> Vladislav introduces the rule that the abbot-hegumen should be chosen by the monastic community but approved by the prince of Wallachia; “he is to come here, that is to Ungrovlahia, so that he may be confirmed by My Majesty as *ktetor*, and thereafter he is to return to the monastery where, calling together the chapter, he will receive his crozier from the *protos* according to custom [ . . . ].”<sup>22</sup>

What of the deeds granted to the other Athonite monasteries? As we have already seen, here we are dealing solely with monetary donations, more exactly with annual subsidies that the princes undertook to supply to a holy place. Further, we may observe that none of these documents contains the threat of spiritual sanction or invokes witnesses. Most conclude with a

prayer (or even two) addressed to the patron saint of the recipient monastery or to the Mother of God,<sup>23</sup> and also contain a category of spiritual advice (*благословь*, “gentle word”), which I have discussed elsewhere.<sup>24</sup> This is a formula whereby the granter of the deed asks his presumptive successor not to neglect or undo the good work that he has done, but rather to continue the custom and make his own contribution to the welfare of the holy places, in expectation of the Last Judgment when all men’s good deeds will be weighed against the bad. The documents in such cases had no binding force in law, and did not oblige anyone to observe them other than the granter of the deed himself and male members of his family. Thus, for example, we frequently find it stated that the prince is taking on the role of benefactor and second *ktetor* to a monastery along with his sons,<sup>25</sup> and/or brother(s), to whom he also bequeaths this duty of care toward the holy place and whom he asks to follow his example for as long as they shall live, or as long as God grants them to reign.<sup>26</sup> This being so, it is entirely to be expected that at least some of these documents also specify the names that the monks are to remember in their prayers (usually that of the benefactor and of his parents, wife, and children)<sup>27</sup> and how exactly they are to be remembered.

It is thus evident that here we are fundamentally dealing with a *lifetime obligation which does not automatically devolve upon the donor’s heirs*. The familial nature of these donations to monasteries beyond the borders of the realm also explains why, in many cases, the monks themselves would often present to the princes the “letters and vows” of their fathers and brothers, and as far as we know the princes almost always responded positively. Unlike the case of the monastery of Koutloumousiou, where princes of Wallachia explicitly assumed the duty of patronage so that it eventually became one of the defining attributes of their power,<sup>28</sup> here the obligations play out at the level of filial piety and sincere concern for the life to come, in a society where “living with the dead” was not, as today, the exception, but rather a structural feature of family cohesion.<sup>29</sup>

Scholars have shown just how far this cohesion might extend, and how durable it could prove.<sup>30</sup> There has however been less work on the ideological aspects of this family tradition—especially in the case of princely dynasties—in the Wallachian and Moldavian cases. In what follows I shall try to give at least a partial glimpse of these aspects.

## THE TRADITION—THE DOMINANT VIEW

It is a curious fact that Wallachia’s chronicles make no mention at all of any princely donation to Athos before the reign of Neagoe Basarab (1512–1521), but that when they write of his deeds, such reports appear suddenly and



prominently. Reviewing the numerous donations with which Neagoe showered the Athonite houses, the author of the chronicle realizes that his list can only be partial and adds: "Why pile word upon word to mention all the monasteries in turn? Enough is to say that he enriched all the monasteries of the Holy Mountain of Athos with money and altar plate. He also donated animals, and paid for building works. Thus he became the *ktetor* of the entire Holy Mountain."<sup>31</sup> We find the same observations regarding his gifts to other holy places in the Ottoman Empire: "What shall we say of all the monasteries in turn to which he donated? Enough to say that he made gifts to all those that are in Europe [in the Byzantine sense], Thracia, Hellada, Achaia, Illyricum, Campania, Hellespont, Moesia, Lugdunia, Paphlagonia, Dalmatia, and everywhere, from East to West and from South to North."<sup>32</sup> Thus Neagoe is portrayed as a benefactor of the whole Orthodox *oikoumene*, both Southern Slav and Greek-speaking regions, from the Balkans to Mount Sinai and as far as "the holy city of Jerusalem, Sion which is the mother of the Church." His devotion and generosity are universal, as is divine grace: "So he was like a loving father for everyone, just like the Heavenly Lord, who ordains that His sun should shine and (sends) the rain over the just and the unjust alike, as the Holy Gospel shows."<sup>33</sup> A worthy successor to the Byzantine emperors, as indeed some modern historians also describe him.<sup>34</sup>

Such abundant detail is cause for surprise if we compare the facts that the same chronicle furnishes about Neagoe's predecessors, whose reigns are dealt with in just a few lines. The depth of detail becomes easy to understand however once we know that the only source for this part of the chronicle was the Greek *Life of Saint Niphon* (BHG 1373a) written by Gabriel, *protos* of Holy Mountain, some time after 1517, presumably at the instigation of the prince himself and his allies, the very influential Craiovescu family, who controlled Wallachian political life almost completely during these years.<sup>35</sup> Thus the *Life of Niphon*, in this redaction, is not just a hagiography of the saint but also of Neagoe, who under Gabriel's pen embodies the ideal ruler, in marked contrast with some of his predecessors and in particular Radu the Great (cel Mare, 1495–1508). In fact the whole work centers on the conflict between Niphon, whom Radu had invited to Wallachia to reform the local church, and the prince himself, who could not tolerate a higher authority than his own. Unable to accept secular interference in what he considered spiritual matters, Niphon was forced to leave the country, although not before unleashing upon the prince, his family, and all the land a terrible curse that was not slow in taking effect. Indeed, Prince Radu and his successors Vlad the Younger (cel Tânăr, 1510–1512) and Mihnea "the Bad" (cel Rău, 1508–1509), all from rival dynastic lines to that of Neagoe, died under this curse. Thus Neagoe came to power as an instrument of the divine will, named as such by Saint Niphon, who would go on to become spiritual father to the prince himself

and to the whole Craiovescu clan. As Neagoe was in fact an usurper and also largely responsible for the tragic death of Vlad the Younger, the chronicle's efforts to legitimize his reign understandably go hand in hand with denigration of his rivals for the throne and their families, who in this scheme of things become veritable prototypes of misrule and treachery.<sup>36</sup>

The original text of the *Life of Niphon* as written by Gabriel the *protos* either has not been preserved, or is still undiscovered.<sup>37</sup> However, another text has been found, a short *Vita* composed around 1514/16 by Justin Dekadyos for the use of the monks at Dionysiou, where the saint's relics are kept.<sup>38</sup> Here matters are quite different. Not only Neagoe's role is limited to the translation of the saint's relics to Wallachia, but there is no mention of any conflict between Radu the Great and Niphon, who did not leave Wallachia hounded by the prince and hurling anathema upon him and his family, but rather laden with gifts and money with which to repair his home monastery of Dionysiou.

Dekadyos's work has had no impact at all upon Romanian historical tradition and historiography,<sup>39</sup> which took Gabriel's *Life of Niphon* as the definitive source. This work was translated into Romanian and modified in parts, then incorporated into the *Cronica Cantacuzinilor*. Although scholars cannot agree exactly when this happened,<sup>40</sup> it must however have been sometime in the latter seventeenth century, most probably after 1658–1660.<sup>41</sup> The chronicle was compiled by a redactor associated with the Cantacuzino family, who traced their descent from Neagoe Basarab and strove to emulate his deeds. Like Neagoe in his own time, the Cantacuzino lords needed local legitimation for their high position and the claims to the throne, which they were not slow in pressing.<sup>42</sup> In this context, it is easy to understand why the memory of rival dynastic lines with better claims to the throne was simply expunged from their *Cronica*, while Neagoe's reign and deeds were exalted.<sup>43</sup> Thus Neagoe became known as the protector *par excellence* of the entire Mount Athos and the founder of a glorious tradition as donor and *ktetor* of all Orthodox, a tradition which other "Basarab" princes were to continue to the same or an even greater degree: Matei Basarab (1632–1654), Șerban Cantacuzino (1678–1688), and Constantin Brâncoveanu (1688–1714). Thus the history of one family, written at a late date and with clear political motives, served as substitute for the history of a whole country, from its foundation down to the end of the seventeenth century.

## THE TRADITION—A DISCORDANT VIEW

Yet there is also another history, a "factual" history reconstructed, as far as possible, from several types of sources. This history does not deny Neagoe's work; rather it adds new elements to the picture. In the light of this version,



however, Neagoe no longer appears as the founder of a tradition, as presented in the *Cronica Cantacuzinilor*, but rather as an imitator who did no more than continue and occasionally improve upon the efforts of his rivals and predecessors and their families. In this "other history" the true initiators of a coherent policy to support the holy places of Orthodoxy were Vlad the Monk (Călugărul, 1482–1495, with interruptions) and his son Radu the Great.<sup>44</sup> The fact is that we rarely find Neagoe donating to any holy place that either Vlad or Radu had not enriched before him.

Three examples will be enough to convince the reader of the truth of this claim. The *Cronica Cantacuzinilor* records that Neagoe rebuilt the "monastery of Chariton" (Koutlounousiou) from its foundations, thereby continuing the work of Radu the Great. After describing the prince's numerous gifts to the monastery and its dependent sketes, the author of the *Cronica* adds: "and he called it the great lavra of Wallachia."<sup>45</sup> This version of the donation story is meant to convince the reader that the monastery became "the great lavra of Wallachia" thanks to Neagoe. We have already seen however that this was not the case, for it owed its consecration to Vladislav-Vlaicu, back in 1369. Further, here the chronicle directly contradicts Neagoe's own deed of donation, which although fragmentary, states that Koutlounousiou became "lavra of Wallachia" thanks to Mircea the Older.<sup>46</sup>

The second example concerns a monastery that Neagoe favored with many pious gifts: Dionysiou, Saint Niphon's parent monastery and the place that held his relics.<sup>47</sup> Was Neagoe however the first Wallachian "new ktetor" of this monastery, as the *Cronica Cantacuzinilor* would have us believe? Ottoman documents clearly say otherwise, stating that a decade before Neagoe, none other than Radu the Great had asked Sultan Bayezid II to grant privileges for Dionysiou and stating directly that "the monastery in question is connected to me."<sup>48</sup> Thus we must admit that there was already a link between the Wallachian princely dynasty and the monastery by 1504. Since the former Patriarch Niphon came to Wallachia before that date, it is likely that it was precisely through him that Dionysiou became "connected" with Radu the Great.<sup>49</sup> All this is reinforced by a letter of the erudite monk Maxim the Greek (Trivoulis), who spent some time in Dionysiou, to Grand Duke Basil III of Muscovy (1518–1519). Maxim states that the monastery was rebuilt with Niphon's money.<sup>50</sup> Where might Niphon have this money from? The answer is provided by Justin Dekadyos: from Radu the Great. It is likely that Radu favored Dionysiou following an established family tradition, if his motive was not simply to aid Niphon's home monastery.<sup>51</sup>

The third example is that among the gifts that Neagoe Basarab presented was "an apple of gold with pearls and precious stones" to embellish the wonder-working icon of the Theotokos at Vatopedi, a monastery to which

the prince had granted many gifts including an annual subsidy, although this is unconfirmed by any other sources.<sup>52</sup> It is not yet clear which icon is meant (Βηματαπίσσα?), given that the monastery possesses several such.<sup>53</sup>

Recent research has revealed the existence of an icon of the "little Deësis" type, showing the Theotokos *Vatopaidina* enthroned, with the Christ child in her arms, Saint John the Baptist to her right, and to her left Radu the Great, offering the Virgin and Child three bede-rolls, which can be easily identified as charters of donation.<sup>54</sup> The Wallachian prince is shown crowned, and his robe decorated with double-headed eagles. The inscription on the icon is in Greek: Ο ΕΥΣΕΒΕΣΤΑΤΟΣ ΕΝ ΧΡΙΣΤΩ ΤΩ ΘΕΩ ΠΙΣΤΩΣ ΑΥΘΕΝΤΗΣ Κ(ΑΙ) ΑΥΤΩΚΡΑΤΟΡ. ΠΑΣΗΣ ΟΥΓΚΡΩΒΛΑΧΙΑΣ ΙΩ(ΑΝΝΗΣ) ΡΑΔΟΥΛΑΣ ΒΟΕΒΟΔΑΣ. Κ(ΑΙ) ΝΕΟΣ ΚΤΙΤΟΡ. There is also a date, either when the icon was completed or when it was donated: 1502.

The icon is now at the monastery of Saint Demetrius in Bitola (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), and was most probably painted in Wallachia as a gift to the Vatopedi monastery.<sup>55</sup> The mention of the act of donation is uncommonly important, since there is no extant charter of donation from Radu the Great for Vatopedi. However, a charter of the Wallachian Prince Vlad Vintilă (July 27, 1533) offers valuable insight here.<sup>56</sup> The charter establishes an annual subsidy for Vatopedi and certifies to the wonder-working reputation of an icon of the Mother of God owned by the monastery (although again, it does not specify which).<sup>57</sup> This pious gift by Vlad Vintilă was not new in itself; he was merely following in his grandfather's and father's footsteps, whose charters the monks of Vatopedi showed him in support of their plea when they came to Wallachia to seek his aid. As was to be expected, Vlad Vintilă instituted memorial masses for himself and his ancestors in the chapel of "the holy Prophet and Prodigios John the Baptist," which in its time had been rebuilt from donations by his (purported) father Radu the Great.<sup>58</sup> As the document of 1533 recounts, among his other gifts to the monastery Radu the Great had the chapel of Saint John the Baptist built at Vatopedi, fully justifying his presence on the icon of Bitola.

It is by no means impossible that Radu's donation of the icon and other gifts to the monastery of Vatopedi were in fact a sign of good relations with Niphon. The Greek *Life* of the saint records that he began his monastic life at Vatopedi and spent a year there after leaving Wallachia (1505–1506).<sup>59</sup> If Petre Ș. Năsturel's hypothesis is correct, at least one of the gifts referred to in Vlad Vintilă's charter was either presented by Vlad the Monk and Radu the Great as co-rulers, or dates to the first years of Radu's reign, in which case it would coincide with the pontificate of Patriarch Maxim (1491–1497), who had been a monk and hegumen at Vatopedi under the name of Manasses. After 1497, Maxim returned to his home monastery and died there, probably in 1502.<sup>60</sup>

We should add that at least one more case is known when Radu the Great gained favors for Vatopedi, as recorded in a document issued by Bayezid II at Wallachian request clarifying the monastery's tax obligations toward the Ottoman treasury.<sup>61</sup> As in the case of Dionysiou, the document specifies that Vatopedi was "connected to" the prince, unsurprising given that he must have intervened on behalf of Vatopedi at the same time as he did for Dionysiou, as the dates of the documents show: 22nd and 24th May, 1504.<sup>62</sup>

### THE WALLACHIAN PRINCES' "PATRONAGE" OF THE MONASTERY OF HILANDAR

If in all these cases it is often only an assumption that Neagoe's predecessors donated gifts to the Athonite monasteries before him, there is no doubt in the case of relations with Hilandar. Proof is provided by Vlad the Monk's famous and much-studied charter to the "great Serbian lavra" in November 1492.<sup>63</sup>

Influenced by the subsequent history of relations between the Wallachian princes and Hilandar, scholars have considered this a quasi-institutional form of transfer, in which the Wallachian rulers took over the noble duty of patronage for Holy Mountain from the last representative of the Serbian dynasty, Mara Branković (even though she was not in fact the last). The document indicates quite the opposite, however, pointing toward a transfer from one family on the verge of political extinction (the Branković) to another (Vlad the Monk's line) which, thanks to favourable circumstances, held power in a state that was still autonomous, even though tributary to the Porte. The charter issued by Prince Vlad conforms completely to the logic of other deeds granted to Athonite monasteries, with the sole exception that it refers explicitly to a "legacy" which the Wallachian prince took over from Mara Branković and her sister "Cantacuzina." Here too, as in other instances, the prince assumes a lifelong obligation for himself ("for as long as we shall live and as long as it pleases God that we enjoy that which He has entrusted to us") and his sons "whom God has given us, Io Radu voivode (the Great) and Mircea." Furthermore, he bequeathed them an obligation to continue this duty: "we have left this care to our above-named sons, Io Radu voivode and Mircea [. . .] after our death, that they may perform it for as long as God shall grant them to live and to hold the power which He entrusted to their forefathers."

Mircea never reigned, but Radu obeyed his father's wishes and made several gifts to the Hilandar.<sup>64</sup> Paradoxically or otherwise, Patriarch Niphon was maybe to play a role here, who had spent his own childhood at the court of the despot of Morea, Thomas Palaiologos, brother-in-law of Djuradj Branković and beloved uncle of Mara Branković.<sup>65</sup> After Radu the Great, nearly all

princes descended from Vlad the Monk donated to Hilandar: Vlad the Younger<sup>66</sup> (cel Tânăr, son of Vlad the Monk, 1510–1512), Radu of Afumați<sup>67</sup> (son of Radu the Great, 1522–1529, with intermissions), Vlad the Drowned<sup>68</sup> (Înecatul, son of Vlad the Younger, 1530–1532), Vlad Vintilă (purported son of Radu the Great, 1532–1535), and Radu Paisie (son of Radu the Great, 1535–1545). All surviving grants by these princes follow the logic of family giving presented above: they invoke documents and promises given by forebears, specify that the gift is effective only for the lifetime of the prince granting it, and sometimes his sons and brothers, and they do not contain spiritual sanctions or call upon witnesses. At no point is Hilandar (or any dependency) called a "monastery of My Lordship."

Just like the *Life* of Niphon, and the *Cronica Cantacuzinilor* into which it was later inserted, the charter of 1492 makes no mention at all of any previous donation to Hilandar. In its logic, Vlad is the founder of a tradition, just as Neagoe is presented in the *Cronica*. Here again we are faced with a manipulation of the truth, since there had been at least one earlier gift to Hilandar by Basarab the Younger (1477–1481/2), Vlad the Monk's predecessor and rival and the supposed father of Neagoe Basarab. Ottoman documents show that at some point before October 1481, the Ottoman authorities considered Basarab the Younger the legitimate protector of Hilandar.<sup>69</sup> I have recently uncovered further proof to support these sources, an obituary of the monastery that unequivocally states that this prince had become the new *ktetor* of the great Serbian lavra.<sup>70</sup> All this shows clearly enough that despite the rhetoric of the charter of 1492, Vlad the Monk was doing no more than follow his predecessor and rival's example. Nor can he have been unaware of this, all the more so since quite plausibly the monks themselves informed him of the fact when they came to Wallachia. On the other hand, it is hard to believe that the prince would have used the names of Djuradj Branković's two daughters, particularly Mara's, with no sort of justification; we may suppose that he discussed the matter of Hilandar with at least one of them. Further, Vlad had direct contact with the Ottoman authorities before November 1492, since in the summer of 1491 (29th June–7th July) he had obtained a charter in favor of Koutloumousiou from the Sultan.<sup>71</sup>

As far as we know, Neagoe himself made little attempt to recover the memory of his supposed father Basarab the Younger, and in any case he only rarely passed over the names of his predecessors and rivals in silence—perhaps because it would have been very hard to ignore their charters so soon after their deaths. Thus in the deed of donation to the skete of the "Albanian Tower" dated 2nd August, 1512 (immediately after he took the throne), Neagoe openly announces his intention to become a *ktetor* "together with the holy *ktetors* before us, Prince Io Vlad voivode (the Monk) and Prince Io Radu voivode (the Great)."<sup>72</sup> However, when establishing the annual sum to



be paid to the monastery, Neagoe specifies that he will respect the amount, which his father Basarab the Younger saw fit to give in his time. We can thereby conclude that Basarab actually originated relations with the Albanian Tower, unsurprising given his other links with Hilandar. In this case, though the practices of family policy and princely institutions differ, they do not contradict one another.<sup>73</sup>

The same would not be the case a century and a half later, when *Cronica Cantacuzinilor* was compiled. By then Vlad the Monk's lineage had died out, while the dynastic branch descended from Neagoe flourished politically once Matei Basarab and his successors fully assumed the (partly real and partly invented) legacy of their forefathers. By now a family tradition had become wholly unified with the institution of rulership, to which no other family in the realm had access. Thus history was rewritten to serve the interests of those who held power; in this history, the figure of Neagoe had to legitimize the present state of affairs, by projecting current concerns back into the past. Furthermore, as in Neagoe's case, the same *Cronica Cantacuzinilor* enumerates more than twenty churches and monasteries that Matei founded or renovated in Wallachia; there are also references to many donations he made in Jerusalem and Mount Athos.<sup>74</sup>

This information is confirmed by other sources,<sup>75</sup> since Neagoe's descendants made a daily practice of emulating exactly those deeds of their illustrious ancestor recorded in the chronicle they themselves had commissioned. The case of Hilandar is very revealing here; almost every "Basarab" prince of the seventeenth century donated some gift to the great Serbian lavra of Athos,<sup>76</sup> and many did the same for Saint Paul.<sup>77</sup> The situation is similar for monasteries and churches in Southern Slavic lands,<sup>78</sup> where the *Cronica Cantacuzinilor* also makes Neagoe Basarab the founder of a tradition.<sup>79</sup> Here too however the actual originators were Vlad the Monk and, in particular, Radu the Great.<sup>80</sup> Needless to say, there is no mention of their donations in the *Cronica Cantacuzinilor*, which exalts instead Neagoe's deeds of charity as presented in the Romanian *Life of Niphon*.

Comparative analysis of the deeds of donation shows that at least in the first phase, alms and charitable gifts to the monasteries of Holy Mountain have a clear family dimension, with the exception of those to Koutloumousiou. The case of donations to Hilandar is relevant here. Thus it is too much to suggest an institutional relationship of patronage between the princes of Wallachia and the monastic community of existed Athos. The Romanian *Life of Niphon*, composed and then incorporated into the *Cronica Cantacuzinilor* in the latter seventeenth century, instrumentalizes the symbolic capital entailed in becoming the *ktetor* for Athonite monasteries. This text on the one hand delegitimizes rival branches of the dynasty, and on the other hand constructs the figure of an ideal monarch in Neagoe Basarab, the prince from whom the

Cantacuzino clan traced their Wallachian descent. In the chronicle's view of the world, Neagoe is the founder of a tradition, patron of all Mount Athos and all religious foundations throughout the Orthodox world. In this case, the status of *ktetor* is institutionally associated with princely rule. At the same time, the princes claiming descent from Neagoe applied exactly the policy that the chronicle attributed to their forefather and illustrated through his several gifts to Mount Athos and in the Southern Slav territories of the Ottoman Empire. In this context, the act of alms-giving and the material costs involved—the donation itself—become more and more identified as a structural feature of princely power, without losing their quality as a gesture within a family tradition. In other words, Neagoe as prince and universal *ktetor*, as he appears in the chronicle, is far more a projection into the past of the realities of the 1650s and 1660s than the portrait of a ruler of the early sixteenth century.

On the other hand, the "invention of tradition," which made the Wallachian princes the protectors *par excellence* of Orthodox holy places subject to the Porte, must be understood in terms of their kinship ties with the princely and noble families of the Southern Slavic realms, especially the Serbs. Here again the case of Neagoe Basarab is the best-known, and thus the most studied.<sup>81</sup> However, it is by no means impossible that Basarab the Younger, Vlad the Monk, and/or Radu the Great may themselves have formed such marriage alliances before Neagoe, which would explain their proven interest in supporting Serbian Orthodoxy.<sup>82</sup> It has been assumed, without concrete evidence, that Radu's second wife, Cătălina, was a daughter of the Montenegrin dynast Jovan Crnojević.<sup>83</sup> Radu's nephew (the son of his sister) Pârvu of Băjesti was certainly married to the daughter of the Serbian noble Dmitry Jakšić, in his turn a kinsman to the Branković despots.<sup>84</sup> Thus it was no accident that Radu invited Maxim Branković to Wallachia,<sup>85</sup> who may have arrived there accompanied by his nephew Salomon Crnojević.<sup>86</sup> Whether or not that was the case, we do know from the commemoration books of Hilandar that in the time of Vlad the Monk and his sons there were remarkable social dimensions to relations with the great Serbian monastery, involving most of the Wallachian elite, whose precise relationships with Serbian families still remain to be elucidated.<sup>87</sup> Once again, we find pious and charitable deeds explained through the strength and dynamism of family ties.

#### THE "MOLDAVIAN TRADITION": FACTS AND CONTROVERSIES

Can the same be said of Moldavia? Here, Prince Ștefan the Younger (1517–1527) was married to Stana, a daughter of Neagoe Basarab and Despina-Milica Branković,<sup>88</sup> which explains why his name appears in the



commemoration roll of Krušedol monastery, founded by Maxim Branković. Further family ties between the house of Branković and the Moldavian dynasty came with Petru Rareș' (1527–1538; 1541–1546) marriage to Elena, daughter of the despot Jovan, who lived in exile in Hungary.<sup>89</sup> As well as donations to Hilandar (1533)<sup>90</sup> and possibly Saint Paul,<sup>91</sup> Rareș also offered material support to the monasteries of Sopoćani, Lesnovo, Kratovo, and Krušedol.<sup>92</sup> Petru Rareș's deed of donation to Hilandar in 1533, the first such charter we know of issued by a Moldavian prince, is an interesting document in itself. First, as has been remarked in the scholarship, Rareș declares his intention to increase his support to Hilandar if God should deliver him "from the hands of the pagan peoples" (*отъ руки иноплеменикъ*), whom we may take to be the Ottomans. This statement ties in with his crusading projects,<sup>93</sup> and with his wife's family, the "rightful" protectors of Hilandar.<sup>94</sup> Second, this was notably the first time that a prince of the Wallachian and Moldavian principalities expressed the wish that the Serbian monastery "should from now on be called the monastery of Our Lordship." (*да сѧ зоветь отднѣсь монастырь господства нашего*).<sup>95</sup> As husband of the Despotissa Elena Branković, Rareș now took Hilandar under his protection and thereby understood that he might consider it "his monastery," just as the Moldavian princes considered Zographou theirs, and the Wallachian princes Koutloumousiou.

Rareș's initiative here was continued by his (posthumous) son-in-law Alexandru Lăpușneanul (1552–1561; 1563–1568), known to have granted a series of donations to monasteries on Mount Athos and in Serbia, amongst these a liturgical veil for Mileševa "where our most pious Father Saint Sava of Serbia resides."<sup>96</sup> Scholarship has also remarked on the Serbian origin of some elements of ceremonial at the prince's court, and all of this can likely be traced back to the Serbian retinue of his mother-in-law Elena Branković.<sup>97</sup> Lăpușneanul's name also appears in a memorial roll of the monastery of Hilandar, which proves that the Moldavian princes' "Serbian policy" continued until at least 1550s.<sup>98</sup>

The importance of this latter document is even bigger, as it shifts the discussion of the beginnings of relations between Moldavia and Hilandar back by about a century. Indeed, there it is written that: *въ лѣтѣ 7466 мѣца іюліа кѣ написасе воєвода молдѣвскы оу поменикъ и метаніе сътвори да еѣхтѣторъ монастыра сѣго*. This means that the first Moldavian *ktetor* of the great Serbian lavra was in fact Ștefan the Great (cel Mare, 1457–1504), who granted Hilandar a donation on 27th July 1466.<sup>99</sup> This donation certainly was significant enough for the prince and his family (his father Bogdan II, ruler of Moldavia (1449–1451), his mother Maria-Oltea, together with his first wife Eudokia of Kiev, and two of their children, Alexandru and Olena) deserved to be commemorated by the monks. We understand now why Ștefan's name also appears among those of the principal *ktetors* of Hilandar, namely the

Serbian, Bulgarian, and Georgian rulers, along with those of his son Alexandru and one of his wives, Maria. Thus we can postulate that besides the gift he granted on 27th July 1466, Ștefan also made a second donation to Hilandar sometime between September 1472 (when Ștefan married Maria Asanina Palaiologos) and July 1496 (when his son Alexandru died).<sup>100</sup>

Documents in the Hilandar's archives point to an even closer involvement. The names of Ștefan, his son Alexandru, and his wife Maria also feature in the memorial roll of the skete known as the Albanian Tower (*Arbanaški pirg*). A marginal note added later includes one more princess named Maria in the roll of prayers,<sup>101</sup> suggesting that Ștefan donated to this holy place at least twice: once during his marriage to Maria Asanina Palaiologos (September 1472–December 1477) and then again (probably to confirm the preceding grant) while married to his third wife, Maria-Voichița (from summer 1478 to July 1504). In all likelihood, the first grant to the Albanian Tower can be dated to 1472/73, since immediately thereafter he was at war with the Ottoman Empire.<sup>102</sup> The second donation is harder to place. Given that only this one alteration was made to the memorial roll, we might reckon with the period immediately following his marriage to Maria-Voichița, but before the birth of their first son Bogdan-Vlad (16th June 1479) whose name does not appear on the roll; this would place it between summer 1478 and June 1479.

It is certainly risky to venture any interpretations on the basis of such a precariously founded chronology. Nevertheless, we can advance some hypotheses.

First of all, we can remark that the Hilandar memorial roll presents the same structure as two other deeds of donation by Ștefan the Great in exactly this period: one for the Zographou monastery on Athos (10th May 1466),<sup>103</sup> and the other for Probota monastery, where his mother was buried (9th July 1466). In every instance, the family dimension to the donations and corresponding liturgical acts of commemoration is fairly clear. In the chrysobull granted to Probota, Ștefan specifies that the monks should pray for prince Alexandru the Good (his grand-father, 1400–1432), his father Bogdan II and mother Maria-Oltea, himself and his wife Eudokia, along with their children Alexandru and Olena;<sup>104</sup> thus, with the exception of the elder Alexandru, these are exactly the same names as recorded in the memorial roll at Hilandar. Ștefan's parents are not named in the deed of donation to "his monastery" of Zographou, but the monks are asked to put the prince's own name into their memorial roll along with those of his wife Eudokia and their children, "given by God," Alexandru and Olena.<sup>105</sup> Again, the list of names is the same as that at Hilandar.

In all these situations Ștefan showed particular concern for the memory of his immediate ancestors, and for the future of the power consolidated



during nine years of his rule—it is no accident that the donations are given in the names of three (at Probota, even four) generations. The fact that this dynastic manifesto is repeated thrice in almost identical terms is significant in itself, as are the places where the prince chose to proclaim it. The case of Probota, one of the oldest monasteries in Moldavia, is quite clear. In the case of Zographou, many authors have considered the document of 10th May 1466 to have the full force and status of a *typikon*; this may be an exaggeration but, whatever the case may be, the document certainly marks the beginning of Moldavian princely patronage over the great Bulgarian monastery on Athos. We know nothing about the size of Ștefan's grant to Hilandar, but the fact that *the donation was made at the same time as the others* suggests that the prince considered the Serbian lavra just as important a bastion of Orthodoxy as "his monastery" of Zographou, or an outstanding monastery within his own realm. Coincidentally or not, at the very moment Mara Branković was composing her will (21st May 1466),<sup>106</sup> Ștefan appropriated the spiritual legacy of the Southern Slav rulers on the one hand, and on the other hand laid the foundation stone for his own such legacy, the great monastery of Putna (10th July 1466),<sup>107</sup> which was to be the burial place for his family. He also ordered work to begin on compiling the first part of the chronicle of his own reign.<sup>108</sup> Moreover, the past and future of the dynasty and the realm were fused into a present that the prince conceived as tightly bound up with the military projects against the Ottomans.<sup>109</sup>

As for the donations to the Albanian Tower, the first seems to have been made just as preparations were underway for Ștefan's wars against the Porte (1475 and 1476).<sup>110</sup> If this is the case, then here too we see a donation to the Serbian monastery of Athos in the same period as the donations to Zographou.<sup>111</sup> The fact that Ștefan made grants to a monastery founded by the father of the Albanian hero Skanderbeg and under the patronage of Saint George (as is also the case with Zographou), whom the Moldavian prince particularly venerated,<sup>112</sup> further clarifies the crusading dimensions of his wars against the Ottomans. Such gestures must be placed in a larger context yet, marked by a whole series of uncommonly significant events. In 1473, Ștefan married Maria Asanina Palaiologos of the Mangop (Theodosian) dynasty, a scion of the imperial dynasty of that name.<sup>113</sup> At the same time, he effected a rapprochement with Hungary, which sheltered an important Serbian faction including the distinguished families of Branković and Jakšić.<sup>114</sup> This period also saw the first redactions of the chronicle of Moldavia,<sup>115</sup> encompassing the whole history of the realm from its foundation by the voivode Dragoș, whose tomb Ștefan marked with a new stone apparently in the same year 1473.<sup>116</sup> Once again, as in 1466, the concern to perpetuate the memory of his ancestors and to affirm his own dynastic line goes hand in hand with a concern for the Byzantine-Slavic heritage, as illustrated by the prince's order that various

texts be copied out, rightfully considered cornerstones of the ideology of princely authority: the *Tetraevangelia* of Humor, the *Panegyric* of Constantin the Great, and the *Syntagma* of Mathew Blastares (this last being copied from a Serbian version).<sup>117</sup>

In the current state of our knowledge, it would be presumptuous to venture any further on the significance of Ștefan the Great's grants to Hilandar. However, we should mention a further stage in his policy of support to the Athonites, in the final years of his reign. Between 1495 and 1504, as well as granting a series of donations to the monasteries of Zographou and Gregoriou (1497, 1500, 1502), Ștefan also financed construction work at Vatopedi (1495–1496) and Saint Paul (shortly before 1500),<sup>118</sup> and quite likely also aided the Russian monastery of Saint Panteleimon.<sup>119</sup>

These last facts give cause for reflection.

In the case of his ties to Saint Paul, it is now clear that these followed from an established interest in the Serbian monasteries of Holy Mountain, more than three decades old. Logically enough, after Hilandar, the Serbian lavra *par excellence*, it was next the turn of the Branković family foundation, as the last Serbian despot (a title which had become merely a courtesy), in exile in Hungary, could no longer support it.<sup>120</sup> Given that the Branković family still existed, what else might explain Ștefan's care for Saint Paul, if not kinship ties or some other close relation between the two parties? Furthermore, historians have always invoked such ties to explain donations to this monastery by the Wallachian prince Radu the Great (1499/1500) and by the Wallachian family of the Craiovescu (28th January 1501).<sup>121</sup> How then might we explain Ștefan's action, if not through the same motive? How might we explain why three social actors (or groups of actors) took the same actions, in the same manner and almost at the same moment, if not because all three were similarly connected by the object of their actions?<sup>122</sup>

We have no clear proof of a marriage alliance between Ștefan's family and the Branković or their direct allies. There are however some clues that point in this direction. Thus it is thought that the mother of Ștefan's third wife (Maria-Despina, wife of the Wallachian prince Radu the Handsome [cel Frumos]) was the daughter of the Albanian dynast Gjergj Arianiti Comnen, which would go some way to explaining Ștefan's support for the Albanian Tower.<sup>123</sup> On the other hand, it has also been shown that at least one of the icons formerly held in the church of the Mother of God "of Belgrade" in Constantinople (known as the "Serbian Church") was presented by Prince Ștefan Lăcustă (1538–1540) of Moldavia in 1539.<sup>124</sup> What would the purpose of such a gesture have been unless the prince himself, or a close member of his family, were somehow connected to the Serbian community in the Ottoman capital (very influential at exactly this time)?<sup>125</sup> Thus it is possible that Ștefan Lăcustă's mother, wife, or both may have belonged to this



community. Although nothing is known of Lăcustă's mother's antecedents, it seems that she came from Constantinople. His wife's origins are equally unknown but her name, Kneajna, could indicate she came from the Southern Slavic milieu.<sup>126</sup> Even if historians cannot agree on Ștefan Lăcustă's ancestry and family ties, there seems to me no doubt that he came from the Moldavian ruling family and was either the son or, more likely, the grandson of Ștefan the Great.<sup>127</sup> In the latter case, his patronage of the Serbian Church in Constantinople may perhaps indirectly testify to some family tie between Ștefan the Great himself and the Serbian world, and the donations to Saint Paul in the latter part of Ștefan's reign might have been motivated by some such matrimonial alliance.<sup>128</sup> If this was the case, then the list of Moldavian princes who supported Serbian Orthodoxy grows longer; it begins with Ștefan the Great in 1466, continues with his grandsons Ștefan the Younger and Ștefan Lăcustă, and culminates in the reigns of Petru Rareș and Alexandru Lăpușneanul, respectively Ștefan the Great's son and grandson.<sup>129</sup>

Whatever the case may be, it must be noted that in exactly the same period, 1495–1504, the Wallachian Prince Radu the Great made several grants of income to precisely these monasteries of Vatopedi, Saint Paul, and Saint Panteleimon, which thus seem to have stood under a double patronage, both Moldavian and Wallachian. Furthermore, Radu's name also appears in the memorial roll of the Albanian Tower. Are these facts mere matters of happenstance, or do they rather suggest more than simple coincidence?

The first point we must emphasize is that the charity of Moldavian and Wallachian princes toward a *chosen few* Athonite monasteries began just thirteen years after the extinction of the Christian Byzantine Empire, with Ștefan the Great's donations to Zographou and Hilandar. In the second phase, more monasteries received donations from Ștefan, but also from the Wallachian Princes Vlad the Monk and Radu the Great. Given that some monasteries thus benefited from donations from both realms at much the same time, it seems quite clear that *we cannot talk of any kind of sole patronage over all Mount Athos* as has sometimes been argued, but must rather refer to individual acts of devotion, motivated by particular considerations and ideological stakes that must be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

On the other hand, we cannot rule out that this instance of parallelism may indeed indicate rivalry between the princes of the two realms. I have showed that Ottoman documents call Hilandar "the monastery of the prince of Wallachia" (Basarab the Younger) in 1481, thus while Mara Branković still lived and when Ștefan the Great of Moldavia had already granted at least two donations to the Serbian monasteries on Athos.<sup>130</sup> The same is true of Vlad the Monk, who openly proclaimed himself the new *ktetor* of Hilandar, saying that Mara Branković had asked him to care for the monastery after her death. Both of these Wallachian princes have started their careers as the

political clients of Ștefan the Great and owed him their thrones; at the same time, Ștefan himself did not cease his donations to Hilandar. Furthermore, the Branković from Hungary continued claiming of their status as hereditary *ktetors* of Hilandar. In the charter they delivered for the Serbian lăura in 1486 Despot Djuradj Branković (future monk Maxim), together with his mother Angelina and his brother, future Despot Jovan, assert it explicitly.<sup>131</sup> Some years later (1503), Jovan's widow, "Despotica" Jelena Jakšić, also gave 100 ducats to "our monastery, the imperial and great Lavra of the Most Saint Mother of God Hilandar" (*монастироу нашему царские и великие Лаври прѣсвѣтые Богородице Хиландарьскіе*).<sup>132</sup>

Who then was really the "patron" of the Serbian lăura? Was there really only one "patron"? And if there was only one, what was his claim to exercise such "patronage"?

Regardless of the formulas used in Ottoman documents, we should note that not one Wallachian prince actually called Hilandar "his monastery" in the charters of donation. Rather this term is used by Petru Rareș in 1533, suggesting that the prince of Moldavia, husband of a Branković princess, wished to become the protector *par excellence* of the Serbian house, despite the fact that the Wallachian princes were also offering their financial support.<sup>133</sup> Thus we might suppose that *this close and constant relation with the Serbian monastery was based on some kinship ties between the Wallachian and Moldavian princes and the Branković family and/or their allies*. Nor should we forget that in the Kingdom of Hungary the title of despot was transmitted in the female line too, from the Branković to the Berislavić.<sup>134</sup>

#### BY WAY OF CONCLUSION: MOLDAVIAN AND WALLACHIAN PRINCES BETWEEN ATHOS AND CONSTANTINOPLE/ISTANBUL

We cannot end this discussion without referring—very briefly, and with no claims to provide any definitive answer—to two further problems. The first is that of ecclesiastical relations between the two Romanian principalities and the Great Church of Constantinople. Here the question is whether the Wallachian and Moldavian princes could have ties to Athos without also maintaining cordial relations with the Ecumenical Patriarch. If the answer is quite clear in the case of Wallachia,<sup>135</sup> the same cannot be said of Moldavia.

Here two competing opinions confront and sometimes clash. They can be summed up fairly quickly; the first holds that the Moldavian Church was autonomous, if not indeed autocephalous, given that there is no verifiable information to indicate that the Church was in any way effectively subordinate to the Ecumenical Patriarch. Moreover, it holds that Ștefan the Great



circumvented the Patriarchate, by that time an exclusively Greek institution and subject to the Ottoman Porte, and instead established direct relations with Mount Athos, becoming its patron at some point.<sup>136</sup> The second view claims that such a situation would have been absolutely impossible, given that during Ștefan's reign "la communauté athonite se trouve [. . .] comme depuis 1312 jusqu'à nos jours, sous la juridiction directe du Patriarcat œcuménique, phénomène historique qui prouve à lui seul que la Moldavie gardait intactes après 1453 ses relations avec la Grande Église."<sup>137</sup> As a result, in the context of arguments between various unionist and anti-unionist factions, Ștefan successfully imposed political control over the Moldavian Church, obliging it to fall in line with his wish to establish friendly relations with the Great Church, thereby explaining how he could maintain such close ties to Mount Athos.

In my opinion both views are mistaken since they ignore the contradictory, even surprising dynamic of power relations, which in the ecclesiastical domain just as elsewhere took ever new forms. It seems clear to me that after 1453 the Great Church carried out the policy of the Porte, and that from this point of view any Orthodox dynast who sought to confront the Ottomans would have seen the Church of Constantinople as the Porte's agent. On the other hand, to say that the Patriarch was an "ethnarch" whom the sultan placed in charge of all those designated as belonging to the *Millet-i Rum* does not fit the facts.<sup>138</sup> Certainly, it is hard to prove that Ștefan the Great was necessarily trying to circumvent the Ecumenical Patriarchate in establishing privileged relations with Mount Athos. On the other hand, although in theory both Moldavia and Wallachia were under patriarchal jurisdiction, as confirmed by the *berat* which the sultans granted to the Patriarchs,<sup>139</sup> in practice matters proved to be far more complicated, especially in the first decades after 1453. The reorganization of the Great Church, adapting its structures and integrating these into the new political situation, required multiple changes of direction and deviations from the letter of canon law, as also shown by the official adoption of the principle of *oikonomia*.<sup>140</sup>

Well-founded arguments have also shown that although the Great Church was patron to Athos both *de jure* and spiritually, it had no practical power to impose its decisions upon the monasteries of Holy Mountain,<sup>141</sup> which by the latter fifteenth century already had a history of direct relations with the Ottoman administration. One explanation for this situation is that the Athonites knew the Ottoman system well, having already been a part of it for several decades, and for precisely this reason were used to appealing to the Ottoman authorities particularly in economic matters where these secular powers took precedence over the Patriarchate.<sup>142</sup> Thus the matter of taxation on incomes donated to the monasteries was reserved exclusively to the Ottoman administration, in which the Patriarchate could not intervene in any way; this explains why whenever the Athonites had any trouble of this kind, they appealed—as

we have seen—either to the Ottoman courts or to the princes of Wallachia, vassals of the Porte.<sup>143</sup> For practical reasons both laymen and clerics preferred immediate and definitive results from the Ottoman court system in many situations, including the matter of donations to monasteries,<sup>144</sup> all the more so since any sentence pronounced by an ecclesiastical court could be appealed in the Ottoman courts at any level, from that of the *kadi* right up to the Sultan.<sup>145</sup> In other words, litigants preferred decisions from the Ottoman system, since these had far greater legal force and stronger practical implications than the pronouncements of the ecclesiastical courts.<sup>146</sup> Further, the Athonite monks had to ask for safe-conducts from the Ottoman authorities, rather than from the Great Church, to be able to travel throughout the Empire or beyond its borders (Wallachia and Moldavia included) in order to collect alms.<sup>147</sup>

Further examples could be given, and all lead to the same conclusion; that in the matter of ties between the Moldo-Wallachian Principalities and Athos, the relationship with the Porte rather than with the Patriarchate was decisive. From many points of view, the latter had, willingly or otherwise, simply become one more Ottoman institution. If there was one single factor that allowed the Romanian princes to act as protectors of Orthodox monasteries beyond the borders of their own realms, this was the *pax ottomana*: whether we like it or not, Moldavia's and Wallachia's roles as defenders of Orthodoxy began and grew to their well-known dimensions precisely to the extent that the two principalities became more closely integrated into the Ottoman system.

The second outstanding matter is that of the "imperial status" of the Romanian princes, which would be derived or proven by their role as protectors of Mount Athos *in its entirety* (as well as by other factors). Here too, opinions diverge, and these disagreements have led to some bitter polemics which I will not revive or continue here.<sup>148</sup> I will restrict myself to some observations solely on the relationship between patronage over the monasteries of Athos and the imperial qualities sometimes attributed to the Wallachian and Moldavian princes.

It is unanimously accepted that Mount Athos, as a form of multi-national and pan-Orthodox community, constituted a living symbol of the ecumenical Christian empire as conceived in Byzantine imperial ideology. Logically enough, whoever exercised the patronage over Holy Mountain *in its entirety*, as the Byzantine emperors and Stephan Dušan had, thereby legitimized his own power in a way that tied it to the imperial tradition of Constantinople; in other words, such a ruler could claim to hold the succession to the *basileis*.<sup>149</sup> The question must be whether any Wallachian or Moldavian prince ever exercised such patronage in the period under study here.

At the level of princely discourse, we know of no prince who *explicitly* and *officially* claimed to protect *all* of Mount Athos.<sup>150</sup> Even princes who made



grants to multiple monasteries never spoke of them in these terms; some houses are indeed called "the monastery of My Lordship" but others are not. I believe that we must enquire further as to the meaning of this divergent usage. Hilandar is a relevant example; thus in the chrysobull of November 1492, Vlad the Monk does *not* call it "the monastery of My Lordship" as we might expect, although he openly says that Mara Branković had entrusted to him the patronage over the great Serbian lavra.<sup>151</sup>

The Ottoman documents available to us do little to clarify the situation, knowing that Islamic law did not recognize moral persons but addressed only to individuals. Nevertheless, from the facts at hand we can at least deduce that there were variations in status for the Athonite monasteries in their dealings with the Wallachian princes. Thus, while the charter granted by Bayezid II at Vlad the Monk's request (29th June–7th July 1491) clearly states that Koutloumousiou "is the monastery of the said prince" (*voyvoda' nuñ manāstiri*, translated by the editors as "monastère dudit voïvode"),<sup>152</sup> the charter of Süleyman the Magnificent makes no such specification. Since this charter confirms earlier decisions by Bayezid II and Selim I at the request of previous Wallachian princes, we may suppose that Süleyman considered Radu of Afumați (who requested this new document) to have the same status as his predecessors had allowed to the earlier princes.<sup>153</sup> If so, this confirms the particular status of Koutloumousiou in relation to the Wallachian princes, to which we have referred above.<sup>154</sup>

What of relations with other monasteries? Contrary to what is usually claimed, the Ottoman documents in favor of Dionysiou say no more than that the monastery "is connected" with the Wallachian prince (*bana mute 'allik manastirdir*). Elisabeth Zachariadou points out that the phrase here is "too vague" to allow any conclusions as to the Wallachian princes' legal status in their dealings with the monastery from the Ottoman administration's point of view.<sup>155</sup> The same is true of Vatopedi.<sup>156</sup> Hilandar itself is a separate case which requires further consideration, since we know that an Ottoman document of 1481 considered that the monastery "belongs to the voivode of Wallachia" Basarab the Younger.<sup>157</sup> Further, a document of 1492, referring to another, older charter, even attests double "patronage" by the rival cousins who took the throne in Wallachia, Basarab the Younger and Vlad the Monk, and states that the monastery belonged to both of them, and to their house, as confirmed in another act issued in 1506 and 1513.<sup>158</sup> In this context, as the documents cited show, the family dimension of the deed of donation is evident once more, quite apart from the political implications suggested by the open conflict between the two branches of the Wallachian dynasty. However, another Ottoman document issued in 1506 (during the reign of Radu the Great) merely states that the monastery "is connected to the Wallachian prince," just as in the cases of Koutloumousiou, Dionysiou, and Vatopedi.

Under these circumstances, and until we have further material on which to base a more thorough discussion, we must be cautious of stating that "when the Romanian voivodes interceded with the sultans, this was primarily based upon their rights and obligations as *ktetor* which were recognized by the Ottomans"<sup>159</sup> and we must particularly give up the idea that these princes had the right to direct church affairs "by virtue of their right of patronage, inherited from Byzantium."<sup>160</sup> Thus we must also reconsider the whole interpretation that the Wallachian and Moldavian princes were demonstrating *imperial ambitions* by the mere fact that they were the protectors *de jure* and *de facto* for the whole complex of monasteries on Athos.

None of this diminishes in any way the exceptional ideological importance of Mount Athos for the Wallachian and Moldavian monarchs, which explains why they took on the role of benefactors to the Athonite monasteries. This is reinforced by the way that, as we have shown, this dimension of princely power was used as an argument in the political and ideological battle between competing branches of the dynasty. Nevertheless, although the chrysobulls of donation always proclaim that the voivodes were following on from the "emperors and princes"<sup>161</sup> who had shown their devotion and cared for the houses of God, this says no more than that the princes of Wallachia and Moldavia thereby intended to join—very late, as it happens—the family of Orthodox monarchs, whose fundamental task was to care for the souls of their subjects and for their own. This is precisely the message that the *protos* Chariton addressed to the Wallachian prince in 1369. This does not mean that they either assumed from the very first, or came to assume, any role as "patrons" of the whole of Orthodoxy, nor that they had any legal right to the position when, in time, they came to occupy it in the context of the disappearance of all other Orthodox dynasties of the Balkans.<sup>162</sup> Their only administrative capacity was that, for a variety of reasons, they were able to intervene with the sultan and Ottoman authorities on behalf of one or another monastery.<sup>163</sup> Here again we must note that we only have surviving records of those cases where such intervention met with success; we know nothing at all about any failed attempts.

Part of the Byzantine spiritual and political tradition, this dimension of participation in the destiny of Orthodoxy arrived north of the Danube clad in Southern Slavic vestments, at a moment when Byzantium itself and all other Orthodox states of the Balkans were losing ground in the face of the Ottomans. The role of Southern Slavic monasticism in this process was certainly essential, given that the Bulgarian and Serbian states were close neighbors to the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, especially since all belonged to a culture that used the same language. In this context, family ties seem to have played an uncommonly large role, as indicated by what we currently know of the history of relations with Hilandar.



Those rare donations by Wallachian and Moldavian princes to Athos in the period before the Ottoman conquests of Constantinople and the last Serbian state all show that the principalities were not yet integrated into the Byzantine Commonwealth at the time. The monastery of Koutloumousiou, which had become "Wallachia's house" through the *protos* Chariton's initiative in 1360, was for a long time an exceptional case. The two princes north of the Danube became protectors of Holy Mountain and of Balkan Orthodoxy to a much greater extent *after they had accepted Ottoman suzerainty*, a role which grew as their realms were integrated into the Ottoman system. On the other hand, as can be seen from the cases of Ștefan the Great, Petru Rareș or Radu of Afumați, charitable giving to Mount Athos does not in the least exclude military adventures against the Ottomans—indeed, quite the opposite.<sup>164</sup> However paradoxical it may seem, these two aspects do not contradict one another and were indeed part of the same reality: while politically and administratively the princes of Wallachia and Moldavia depended on the Sultan as vassals, spiritually they never ceased—and never would cease—to be Christian rulers, for whom the end of Ottoman suzerainty always seemed near, and was devoutly to be wished.

## NOTES

1. P. Ș. Năsturel, *Le Mont Athos et les Roumains. Recherches sur leurs relations du milieu du XVIe siècle à 1654* (Rome, 1986), p. 33.

2. G. Ostrogorsky, "Die byzantinische Staatenhierarchie," *Annales de l'Institut Kondakov* 8 (1936), pp. 41–61 [reprint in idem, *Zur byzantinischen Geschichte* (Darmstadt, 1973)]; idem, "The Byzantine Emperor and the Hierarchical World Order," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 35 (1956), pp. 1–14; Fr. Dölger, "Die Familie der Könige in Mittelalter," *Historisches Jahrbuch* 60 (1940), pp. 397–420 [reprint in idem, *Byzanz und die europäische Staatenwelt* (Ettal, 1953)]; A. Grabar, "God and the 'Family of Princes' presided over by the Byzantine Emperor," *Harvard Slavic Studies* 2 (1954), pp. 117–23; I. Al. Biliarsky, *Hierarchia. L'ordre sacré. Étude de l'esprit romanique* (Fribourg, 1997).

3. Document from September 1369; see *Documenta Romania Historica. B. Țara Românească*, vol. 1 (1247–1500), P. P. Panaitescu and D. Mioc (eds.) (Bucharest, 1966), pp. 499–505 (hereafter: DRH. B); *Actes de Kutlumuş. Texte* (Paris, 1988), ed. P. Lemerle, p. 103 (no. 26). This is a direct quotation from the *Homily* of Theodor Syntellos dedicated to the miraculous rescue of Constantinople by the Mother of God in 626. The same expression was commonly used to designate Constantinople, indicating that social actors saw both places as equally sacred within the Orthodox world; I. Biliarsky, "Saint Constantin, Mont Athos et l'idée de la sainteté de l'Empire durant la Turcocratie," *Diritto @ storia* 2 (2003) (<http://www.dirittoestoria.it/memorie2/Testi%20delle%20Comunicazioni/Biliarski-Saint-Constantin.htm>). Later,

Chariton was appointed metropolitan of Wallachia (1372). As early as 1376 he became *protos* of Mount Athos; see *Actes de Kutlumuş*, pp. 8–13; Năsturel, *Le Mont Athos*, pp. 40–51; L. Cotovanu, "Caritone di Koutloumousiou e la presenza romana sul Monte Athos nel XIV secolo," in S. Chialà and Lisa Cremaschi (eds.), *Atanasio e il monachesimo al Monte Athos* (Comunità di Bose, 2005), pp. 153–81.

4. See Șt. Andreescu, "Alianțe dinastice ale domnilor Țării Românești (secolele XIV–XVI)," in I. Agrigoroaiei, Gh. Buzatu, and V. Ciobanu (eds.), *Românii în istoria universală*, vol. 2/1 (Iași, 1987), pp. 675–84; D. Pleșia, "Genealogia Basarabilor, sec. XII–XVII," in *Io, Mircea mare voevod și domn. . .* (Râmnicu Vâlcea, 1986).

5. On Nicodemus, see E. Lăzărescu, "Nicodim de la Tismana și rolul său în cultura veche românească. I (până în 1385)," *Romanoslavica* 11 (1965), pp. 237–85; P. Ș. Năsturel, "Cuviosul Nicodim cel sfințit și odăjdiiile mitropolitului Antim Critopol de la Tismana," *Mitropolia Olteniei* 11, nos. 7–8 (1959), pp. 419–30; E. Turdeanu, "Les premiers écrivains religieux en Valachie: l'hégoumène Nicodème de Tismana et le moine Philothée," in idem, *Études de littérature roumaine et d'écrits slaves et grecs des Principautés Roumaines* (Leiden, 1985), pp. 15–50, here pp. 17–37; T. Teoteoi, "Nicodème de Tismana, archimandrite et porteur d'epigonation," *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes* 45, nos. 1–4 (2007), pp. 101–15. The despot Stefan Lazarević granted both monasteries properties within Serbian lands; see P. P. Panaitescu, *Mircea cel Bătrân*, ed. Gh. Lazăr (Bucharest, 2000), pp. 179–182; A. Veselinović, "Tri povelje iz XV veka za manastire Tismana i Vodica," *Stari Srpski Arhiv* 8 (2009), pp. 183–205; M. Coman, "Podunavia și relațiile sârbo-muntene în secolele XIV–XVI," in R. G. Păun and O. Cristea (eds.), *Istoria: utopie, amintire și proiect de viitor. Studii de istorie oferite Profesorului Andrei Pippidi la împlinirea a 65 de ani* (Iași, 2013), pp. 239–59.

6. According to Turdeanu, although a certain continuity of the Bulgarian literary tradition really existed in Moldavia, "cette continuité n'est représentée, dans les premières années du XVe siècle, que par Camblak dont la biographie ne fournit pas un exemple de l'existence d'un exode bulgare en Moldavie, après la chute de Târnovo"; E. Turdeanu, "Les Principautés roumaines et les Slaves du Sud: rapports littéraires et religieux," in idem, *Études de littérature*, 7. See also I. Iufu, "Despre prototipurile literaturii slavo-române din secolul al XV-lea," *Mitropolia Olteniei* 15, nos. 7–8 (1963), pp. 511–35; idem, "Mănăstirea Moldovița—centru cultural important din perioada culturii române în limba slavonă (sec. XV–XVIII)," *Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei* 39, nos. 7–8 (1963), pp. 428–55. Recently, however, it has been argued that the number of the Bulgarian refugees Northern Danube was truly important; D. I. Mureșan, "Zographou et la transmission de l'idée impériale bulgare en Moldavie," *Bulgaria Mediaevalis* 2 (2011) [*Studies in honour of Professor Vassil Gjuzelev*], pp. 703–53, using data from Al. I. Gonța, "Bulgarii și sârbii în Țările Române în secolele al XV-lea și al XVI-lea," in idem, *Studii de istorie medievală*, ed. M. M. Székely (Iași, 1998), pp. 72–88. However, Gonța emphasized that the number of Bulgarian villages in Moldavia (nineteen) was insignificant compared to the total number of villages and towns existing at that time.

7. The two fundamental monographs on this topic are Val. Al. Georgescu, *Bizanțul și instituțiile românești până în secolul XVIII* (Bucharest, 1980), and A.



Pippidi, *Tradiția politică bizantină în țările române în secolele XVI–XVIII*, (Bucharest, 1983; 2001).

8. See the bibliography in N. I. Pantazopoulos, *Ο δικέφαλος αετός. Η εξέλιξη ενός συμβόλου* (Thessaloniki, 2001). See also A. V. Solovjev, 'Les emblemes héraldiques de Byzance et les Slaves,' *Seminarium Kondakovianum* 7 (1935), pp. 119–64; G. Alef, "The Adoption of the Muscovite Two-Headed Eagle: A Discordant View," *Speculum* 41, no. 1 (1966), pp. 1–21. The history of this symbol in Romanian lands was explored by D. Năstase; see, among others, "L'aigle bicéphale dissimulée dans les armoiries des pays roumains. Vers une cryptohéraldique," in *Roma, Costantinopoli, Mosca (Atti del I Seminario internazionale di studi storici "Da Roma alla Terza Roma," Roma 21–23 aprile 1981)* (Naples, 1983), pp. 357–74; idem, "'Necunoscut' ale izvoarelor istoriei românești," *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie "A. D. Xenopol"* 30 (1993), pp. 483–99; idem, "Vulturii bicefali de la mănăstirea Putna," in *Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt. Atlet al credinței creștine* (Sfânta Mănăstire Putna, 2004), pp. 71–81 (hereafter: *Atlet al credinței*); idem, "Sfințirea mănăstirii Argeș și cruciada antiotomană," *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie* 30 (2012), pp. 77–118. See also T. Teoteoi, "L'aigle impérial en tant que motif littéraire et source d'histoire comparée," in E. Popescu ed., *Études byzantines et post-byzantines*, vol. 4 (Bucharest, 2001). Future research on this topic would profit greatly from A. Boureau, *L'Aigle. Chronique politique d'un emblème* (Paris, 1985).

9. Tellingly, the scribe who made the copy for the Moldavian prince Ștefan the Great (1474) omitted to transcribe the part originally dedicated to Șišman; see E. Turdeanu, *La littérature bulgare au XIVe siècle et sa diffusion dans les Pays Roumains* (Paris, 1947), p. 104; G. Mihăilă, "Tradiția literară constantiniană, de la Eusebiu al Cezareei la Nichifor Calist Xanthopoulos, Eftimie al Târnovei și domnii Țărilor Române," in idem, *Cultură și literatură română veche în context european. Studii și texte* (Bucharest, 1979), pp. 281–332, here 264. See also Kl. Ivanova, "Vizantijskiete iztočnici na Pohvalata za Konstantin i Elena ot Evtimiĭ Tŭrnovski," *Starob'lgarska literatura* 10 (1981), pp. 3–15.

10. See E. A. Zachariadou, "Mount Athos and the Ottomans c. 1350–1550," in *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 5, *Eastern Christianity*, ed. M. Angold (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 154–69; K. Smyrlis, "Mount Athos in the Fifteenth Century: Crisis and the Beginning of Recovery," in *To Ἅγιον Ὄρος στον 15ο και 16ο αἰώνα* (Thessaloniki, 2012), p. 38, note 30 (with comprehensive bibliography).

11. See, among others, E. A. Zachariadou, "Les notables laïques et le Patriarcat œcuménique après la chute de Constantinople," *Turcica* 30 (1998), pp. 119–134; Kl.-P. Matschke: "Research problems concerning the transition to Tourkokratia: The Byzantinist standpoint," in F. Adanir and S. Faroqi (eds.), *The Ottomans and the Balkans: A Discussion of Historiography* (Leiden, Boston, and Cologne, 2002), pp. 79–113; H. İnalcık, "Ottoman Methods of Conquest," *Studia Islamica* 2 (1954), pp. 104–29; P. Konortas, *Les rapports juridiques et politiques entre le Patriarcat de Constantinople et l'administration ottomane de 1453 à 1600 (d'après les documents grecs et ottomans)*, unpublished PhD Diss., University of Paris I, 1985.

12. The first direct contacts with the Ottomans date from the 1390s (Wallachia) and 1420 (Moldavia).

13. *Actes de Kutlunus*, pp. 117–21.

14. See, for instance, Vlad the Monk's charters to Philotheou and Saint Panteleimon, *DRH. B*, vol. 1, pp. 323–6 (no. 202, 1487–1492), pp. 424–7 (no. 263, 1495 September–1496 August 30), and that of Vlad the Younger to Saint Catherine's monastery on Mount Sinai, *DRH. B*, vol. 3 (1526–1535), ed. D. Mioc (Bucharest, 1975), pp. 162–66 (no. 102, 25th October 1530). See also Vlad Vintilă's charter to the Great Lavra, pp. 225–229 (no. 143, 12th January 1533). On the motivations of the Wallachian and Moldavian donations to Athos, see, among others, Năsturel, *Le Mont Athos*, especially pp. 305–11; G. Durand, "Une conséquence inattendue de la politique fiscale du Sultan Sélim II: de l'origine de la dédicace aux autorités athonites des couvents de Valachie et de Moldavie," *Turcica* 44 (2012–2013), pp. 167–79.

15. Konortas, *Les rapports juridiques*, 296; M.-H. Blanchet, *Georges-Gennadios Scholarios (vers 1400—vers 1472). Un intellectuel orthodoxe face à la disparition de l'Empire byzantin* (Paris, 2008), pp. 118–9.

16. Năsturel, *Le Mont Athos*, pp. 180–6.

17. Năsturel, *Le Mont Athos*, pp. 177–8.

18. I leave aside for the moment the charters granted to Hilandar. It should be noted that not all the documents granted to the monasteries were princely charters of the chrysobull type (χρυσόβουλλον); some of them, much simpler and short, are only "letters" (πισανίε) confirming previous donations. For all this, see D. P. Bogdan, *Diplomatica slavo-română din secolele XIV și XV* (Bucharest, 1938), pp. 18ff; M. Cazacu, "La chancellerie des principautés valaque et moldave (XIVe–XVIIIe siècles)," in Chr. Hannick (ed.), *Kanzleiwesen und Kanzleisprachen im östlichen Europa* (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna, 1999), pp. 87–127, here pp. 108ff.

19. See C. Codarcea, *Société et pouvoir en Valachie (1601–1654). Entre la coutume et la loi* (Bucharest, 2002), pp. 319–39.

20. See Vlad the Drowned's charter, *DRH. B*, vol. 3, pp. 182–7 (no. 114, May 1531). This idea may be even older; see Neagoe Basarab's charter, *DRH. B*, vol. 2, (1501–1525), Șt. Ștefănescu and O. Diaconescu (eds.) (Bucharest, 1972), pp. 257–9 (no. 130, 7th December 1514); see below.

21. Literally, οἰκοκύριος / οἰκοκύρος means *pater familias*, householder.

22. *DRH. B*, vol. 2, pp. 499–505. It should be stressed that no such indication exists in the charter (often considered a "true *typikon*") granted by Ștefan the Great to "his monastery" of Zographou; see *Documenta Romaniae Historica. A. Moldova*, vol. 2, (1449–1486), L. Șimanschi, G. Ignat, and D. Agache (eds.) (Bucharest, 1976), pp. 191–4 (no. 135, 10th May 1466) (hereafter: *DRH. A*).

23. See, for instance Radu the Great's charters to Saint Panteleimon monastery, *DRH. B*, vol. 1, pp. 424–7 (no. 263, 1495, September–1496, 30th August, prayer to Saint Panteleimon) and to Kaproullè, pp. 486–9 (no. 298, 31st January 1500, prayers addressed to Saint Nicholas, the monastery's spiritual patron, and to the Theotokos).

24. See R. G. Păun, "La circulation des pouvoirs dans les Pays Roumains au XVIIe siècle. Repères pour un modèle théorique," *New Europe College Yearbook* (1998–1999), pp. 265–310; idem, "Élu de la matrice de ma mère: pouvoir et prédestination aux XVIe–XVIIe siècles," in I. Biliarsky and R. G. Păun (eds.), *The Biblical*



*Models of Power and Law / Les modèles bibliques du pouvoir et du droit* (Frankfurt/Main, 2008), pp. 225–70.

25. Vlad the Monk's charter to Saint Panteleimon monastery, *DRH. B.*, vol. 1, pp. 326–8 (no. 203, 12th June 1487).

26. Radu the Great's charter to Saint Catherine monastery on Mount Sinai, *DRH. B.*, vol. 1, pp. 453–6 (no. 279, 15th September 1497).

27. Radu the Great's charter to Saint Panteleimon monastery, *DRH. B.*, pp. 424–7 (no. 263, 1495 September–1496 30th August).

28. Năsturel, *Le Mont Athos*, pp. 39–71.

29. P. J. Geary, "Échanges et relations entre les vivants et les morts dans la société du haut Moyen Age," *Droits et Cultures* 12 (1986), pp. 3–17 [collected in idem, *Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, New York and London, 1994), pp. 77–94]; N. Zemon Davis, "Ghosts, Kin, and Progeny: Some Features of Family Life in Early Modern France," *Daedalus* 106, no. 2 (1977), pp. 87–111; L. Steindorff, "Donations and Commemorations in the Muscovite Realm—a Medieval or Early Modern Phenomenon," in idem (ed.), *Religion und Integration im Moskauer Russland. Konzepte und Praktiken, Potentiale und Grenzen. 14.–17. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden, 2010), pp. 477–98, especially pp. 494ff.

30. R. Crețeanu, "Traditions de famille dans les donations roumaines au Mont Athos," in E. Stănescu and N.-Ș. Tanașoca (eds.), *Études byzantines et post-byzantines*, vol. 1 (Bucharest, 1979), pp. 135–52. In general, see N. Iorga, "Muntele Athos în legătură cu țările noastre," *Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile Secției Istorice* (2nd series) 36 (1914), pp. 447–517; H. Matanov, "Le mont Athos et les rapports politiques dans les Balkans durant la deuxième moitié du XIVe siècle," *Études balkaniques* 17, no. 1 (1981), pp. 69–100.

31. *Istoria Țării Românești 1290–1690. Letopiseșul Cantacuzinesc*, C. Grecescu and D. Simonescu (eds.) (Bucharest, 1960), p. 31.

32. *Istoria Țării Românești*, p. 33.

33. *Istoria Țării Românești*, p. 33.

34. See, for instance, D. Năstase, "Sfințirea"; I. Moldoveanu, "Sfântul Voievod Neagoe Basarab (1512–1521). O specială privire asupra relațiilor sale cu mănăstirile de la Sfântul Munte Athos, la 500 ani de la înscăunarea sa," in *Sfântul voievod Neagoe Basarab—ctitor de biserici și cultură românească* (Bucharest, 2012), pp. 97–115.

35. Gavril Protul, *Viața și traiul sfinției sale părintelui nostru Nifon, patriarhul Țarigradului care au strălucit între multe patimi și ispite în Țarigrad și în Țara Muntenească*, ed. T. Simedrea (Bucharest, 1937); V. Grecu, *Viața Sfântului Nifon. O redacție grecească inedită* (Bucharest, 1944). On the Craiovescu family, see I. C. Filitti, "Craioveștii și rolul lor politic," *Arhivele Olteniei* 77–78 (1935), pp. 1–16; idem, "Banatul Olteniei și Craioveștii," *Arhivele Olteniei* 11 (1932), pp. 1–128. On the relationship between Neagoe and the Craiovescu family, see D. Pleșia, "Neagoe Basarab—originea, familia și o scurtă privire asupra politicii Țării Românești la începutul secolului al XVI-lea" (I), *Valachica* (Târgoviște, 1969), pp. 45–60; (II), *Valachica* (Târgoviște, 1970), pp. 113–42; N. Stoicescu, *Dicționar al marilor dregători din Țara Românească și Moldova, sec. XIV–XVII* (Bucharest, 1971), pp. 17–19; 46–47; 74. On their relations with the Holy Mountain, see Crețeanu,

"Traditions de famille"; I. Rizea, "Les boyards Craiovești, protecteurs du monachisme athonite post-byzantin," in E. Popescu and T. Teoteoi (eds.), *Études byzantines et post-byzantines*, vol. 5 (Bucharest, 2006), pp. 423–58. On Gabriel, new data are furnished by D. Radoslavova, "Towards the Portrait of Gabriel, the Athonite Protos of the First Half of the 16th Century: The Russian Connection," in M. Jokovic, D. E. Collins, M. A. Johnson, and P. Matejic (eds.), *Love of Learning and Devotion to God in Orthodox Monasteries*, vol. 1 (Belgrade–Columbus, 2006), pp. 191–98.

36. See R. G. Păun, "La couronne est à Dieu. Neagoe Basarab et l'image du pouvoir pénitent," in P. Guran (ed.), *L'Empereur-hagiographe. Culte des saints et monarchie byzantine et post-byzantine* (Bucharest, 2001), pp. 186–224. See also O. V. Olar, "Dracula à rebours. Notes sur la 'Vie de Saint Niphon' (BHG 1373a)," in Fr. Mosetti Casaretto (ed.), *Il corpo impuro e le sue rappresentazioni nelle letterature medievali* (Alexandria, 2012), pp. 435–60.

37. All available Greek copies come from the eighteenth century; see P. Ș. Năsturel, "Recherches sur les rédactions gréco-roumaines de la *Vie de Saint Niphon II, Patriarche de Constantinople*," *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes* 5, nos. 1–2 (1967), pp. 41–77.

38. L. Vranoussis, "Texte și documente românești inedite din Grecia," *Magazin istoric* 6, no. 2 (1972), pp. 6–10, reprinted in D. Zamfirescu, *Neagoe Basarab și "Învățăturile către fiul său Theodosie."* *Problemele controversate* (Bucharest, 1973), pp. 383–5. The text is preserved in Varlaam monastery on Meteora (Ms. 38).

39. It was edited only recently by M. A. Kakouros, "Η πρώτη ἄσματικὴ ἀκολουθία (ca. 1514–1516) πρὸς τιμὴν τοῦ ἁγίου Νήφωνος, ὁ ἐκεῖ περιεχόμενος Συναξαρικὸς Βίος καὶ οἱ νεώτερες ἀκολουθίες (19ος αἰ.): ἱστορία τῆς παράδοσης καὶ τῆς λειτουργικῆς χρήσης τῶν κειμένων στὴν 'Ι. Μ. Διονυσίου ἀπὸ τὴν σύνταξή τους ἕως σήμερα. Μὲ τὴν *editio princeps* τῶν δύο μορφῶν τοῦ Συναξαρικοῦ Βίου (σὲ κριτικὴ ἐκδόση)," in 'Ο Ἅγιος Νήφων πατριάρχης Κωνσταντινουπόλεως (1508–2008). Τόμος ἐπετειακὸς ἐπὶ τῇ συμπληρώσει πεντακοσίων ἐτῶν ἀπὸ τῆς κοιμήσεως αὐτοῦ (Mount Athos, 2008), pp. 272–345.

40. Scholars date this somewhere between 1634 and the end of the 1670s; see the summary of these discussions in Al. Mareș, "Despre data traducerii *Vieții* patriarhului Nifon și despre 'momentul' inserării ei în *Letopiseșul Cantacuzinesc*," in idem, *Scriere și cultură românească veche* (Bucharest, 2005), pp. 348–57.

41. When Patriarch Makarius III Ibn al-Za'im of Antioch passed through Wallachia (1658), the annals he compiled in Arabic followed local Old Slavonic chronicles, by that time the only available sources on the country's history; see V. Căndea, "Letopiseșul Țării Românești (1292–1664) în versiunea arabă a lui Macarie Zaim," *Studii* 23, no. 4 (1970), pp. 673–92. In Makarius' annals, Neagoe's reign and charitable acts are described in only few lines, while Niphon's name does not feature at all; see Ioana Feodorof, "La Chronique de Valachie (1292–1664). Texte arabe du Patriarche Macaire Za'im. Introduction, édition du texte arabe et traduction française," *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 52 (1991–1992), pp. 3–71, here 44.

42. A family of Byzantine origins who had settled in Wallachia at the beginning of the sixteenth century and began to dominate political life there during the reign of their kinsman Matei Basarab; see D. M. Nicol, *The Byzantine Family of*



*Cantakouzenos (Cantacuzenus)*, ca. 1100–1460 (Washington, D.C., 1968); Stoicescu, *Dicționar*, pp. 41, 134–46; J.-M. Cantacuzene, *Mille ans dans les Balkans. Chronique des Cantacuzène dans la tourmente des siècles* (Paris, 1992).

43. The first prince to identify the Craiovescu (Neagoe's family) with the Basarab name of the old ruling dynasty and adopt for himself the name *Basarab* was Radu Șerban (1602–1611); see Stoicescu, *Dicționar*, pp. 94–5; C. Rezachevici, "Domeniul boieresc al lui Radu Șerban," *Studii* 23, no. 3 (1970), pp. 469–91. The founder of the Cantacuzino family in Wallachia, Constantin, married Radu Șerban's daughter; thereafter, all the Cantacuzinos declared themselves descendants of the Craiovescu-Basarab family, and thereby of the first princes of the country. Șerban Cantacuzino, for instance, constantly claimed to be a scion of both the Basarabs and the Byzantine emperors from the Cantacuzenus family; see D. Ionescu, "Șerban Cantacuzène et la restauration byzantine. Un idéal à travers ses images," in Stănescu and Tanașoca (eds.), *Études byzantines et post-byzantines*, vol. 1, pp. 239–267. At the same time, Neagoe's figure was "revived" by Matei Basarab, who claimed to be Neagoe's descendant, to legitimize his right to the throne. Indeed, on his father's side Matei came from the Craiovescu clan, and on his mother's side from the family of Neagoe's mother; see Stoicescu, *Dicționar*, p. 49; Crețeanu, "Traditions de famille," p. 139; Șt. Andreescu, "Ascendența maternă a lui Matei Vodă Basarab," *Arhiva Genealogică* 3, nos. 3–4 (1996), pp. 197–203. His successor Constantin Șerban (1654–1658) was Radu Șerban's illegitimate son. These two lines came together in the person of Constantin Brâncoveanu, who in his turn came from the Craiovescu-Basarab (on his father's side) and the Cantacuzinos (on his mother's side) alike; see R. Theodorescu, "*Dunga cea mare a rodului și neamului său*. Note istorice în arta brâncovenească"; D. Barbu, "Arta brâncovenească: semnele timpului și structurile spațiului," both in P. Cernovodeanu and Fl. Constantiniu (eds.), *Constantin Brâncoveanu* (Bucharest, 1989), pp. 180–202 and 233–62, respectively; Șt. Andreescu, "Neamul boierilor din Brâncoveni," in M. D. Sturdza ed., *Familile boierești din Moldova și Țara Românească. Enciclopedie istorică, genealogică și biografică*, vol. 2 (Bucharest, 2011), pp. 249–57.

44. I. R. Mircea, "Relations culturelles roumano-serbes au XVIe siècle," *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes* 1, nos. 3–4 (1963), pp. 377–419; Năsturel, *Le Mont Athos*.

45. *Istoria Țării Românești*, 30. This remark apparently refers to the harbour Neagoe built in Askalon, which is Avlona or Vlora on the Southern Albanian coast; see T. Teoteoi, "Ascalon—a mistaken toponym in the *Life* of Niphon II, patriarch of Constantinople," *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes* 19, no. 3 (1981), pp. 611–22. In the text Askalon is included among Koutloumousiou's *metochia*, which means that the author refers in fact to this monastery. This fragment too is missing in the available Greek versions of the *Life* of Saint Niphon.

46. *DRH. B*, vol. 2, pp. 257–59 (no. 130, 7th December 1514). The same document mentions that Neagoe continued here works already initiated by Radu the Great and Vlad the Younger, his predecessors and rivals.

47. It has been pointed out that in the *Life* of Niphon, Dionysiou stands in a privileged position; see Crețeanu, "Traditions de famille," pp. 138–9. Thus historians

wonder whether relations between Wallachia and Dionysiou may not have been even older; see Năsturel, *Le Mont Athos*, pp. 142–45. See also Fl. Marinescu, *Ποιμαντικά έγγραφα τοῦ Ἀγίου Ὁποῦς. Ἀρχείου Ἱερᾶς Μονῆς Διονησίου* (Athens, 2013), pp. 9–11.

48. Documents of 24th May 1504 and 4th–13th August 1513 (during Neagoe's reign); E. A. Zachariadou, "Ottoman Documents from the archives of Dionysiou (Mount Athos) 1495–1520," *Südost-Forschungen* 30 (1971), pp. 1–35, here 8–10.

49. Some historians consider that Niphon came to Wallachia in 1504, the same year when Radu the Great himself traveled to Constantinople; N. M. Popescu, "Nifon II, Patriarhul Constantinopolului," *Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice* (2nd series) 36 (1914), pp. 734–97, here 782. See also Năsturel, "Recherches," p. 43 and note 12. A summary of these discussions in A. Falangas, *Présences grecques dans les Pays Roumains (XIVe–XVIe siècles). Le témoignage des sources narratives roumaines* (Bucharest, 2009), pp. 149–64 (he argues that Niphon arrived in Wallachia around 1500). See also N. Panou, "Greek-Romanian Symbiotic Patterns in the Early Modern Period: History, Mentalities, Institutions" (II), *The Historical Review / La Revue Historique* 4 (2007), pp. 59–104, here 61–85.

50. N. V. Sinycina, "Poslanie Maksima Greka Vasiliyu III ob ustroistve Afonskih monastirey (1518–1519 gg.)," *Vizantiskii Vremennik* 26 (1965), pp. 110–136, here 131; Năsturel, *Le Mont Athos*, p. 143 and note 9.

51. Scholars think that the cost of these works was covered by Neagoe Basarab, *Actes de Dionysiou. Édition diplomatique. Texte*, ed. N. Oikonomidés (Paris, 1968), pp. 18–9; Năsturel, *Le Mont Athos*, p. 145. However, Niphon returned to Dionysiou in 1506 and lived there until 11th August 1508; Popescu, "Nifon II," p. 787. Thus there was enough time to start works during his lifetime and with support from Radu the Great (who also died in 1508). Once again, Neagoe carried on his predecessor's initiative.

52. *Istoria Țării Românești*, p. 31. On Neagoe's support to Vatopedi, see Năsturel, *Le Mont Athos*, pp. 90–3. A late source partially confirms the Cantacuzino chronicle but adds: "καὶ πολλὰ χάρισματὰ ἔδωκεν καθὼς καὶ πρώην κτίτορες καὶ ἄρχοντες καὶ αὐθεντάδες"; T. Bodogae, *Ajutoarele românești la mănăstirile din Sfântul Munte Athos* (Bucharest, 20032), p. 120, note 5 (around 1700). This shows that here too Neagoe in fact followed the example of previous "ktetors, nobles, and princes."

53. According to G. Mantzaridis, there were seven "Miraculous Icons—Holy Relics," in *The Great and Holy Monastery of Vatpedi: Tradition, History, Art*, vol. 1 (Mount Athos, 1998), pp. 118ff.

54. M. M. Masnić, "The icon of the Holy Virgin Vatopedini with a portrait of voevoda Ioan Radul," *Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta* 40 (2003), pp. 313–21. Nobody has observed that this icon was already known; see M. Zarić, "La Bitolia, un portret al lui Radu cel Mare," *Magazin Istoric* 18, no. 11 (1984), pp. 29–30; V. Cădea, *Mărturiile românești peste hotare. Creații românești și izvoare despre români în colecții din străinătate*, vol. 3 (Bucharest, 2011), p. 216.

55. According to Masnić, the icon was painted on Mount Athos by an artist of the Cretan School, perhaps Nikolaos Ritzos (d. 1507). As Radu's portrait on the icon is almost identical to that in Govora monastery (Wallachia), it is more likely that the



icon was painted in Wallachia and then sent to Vatopedi (my thanks to Prof. Andrei Pippidi for this observation). It makes little sense that such a work would be kept in Wallachia; its place was in Vatopedi to illustrate the prince's status as new *ktetor*. The Greek inscription reinforces this assumption.

56. *DRH. B*, vol. 3, pp. 264–67 (no. 164); Năsturel, *Le Mont Athos*, pp. 89ff, and 94–5. See also Șt. Andreescu, “Radu vodă cel Mare și mănăstirea Vatoped,” *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie* 29 (2011), pp. 320–1.

57. According to Masnić, the icon is a copy of the Esfagmeni icon (fourteenth century), from the series of those stubbed with a knife.

58. Vlad Vintilă's origins remain unclear. However, he claimed to be Radu the Great's son; see T. Teoteoi, “O misiune a Patriarhiei ecumenice la București în vremea domniei lui Vlad Vintilă din Slatina,” *Revista Istorică* 5, nos. 1–2 (1994), pp. 27–44. See also C. Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică a domnilor din Țara Românească și Moldova (a. 1324–1881)*, vol. 1, *secolele XIV–XVI* (Bucharest, 2001), pp. 185–7.

59. Grecu, *Viața Sfântului Nifon*, 50; Năsturel, *Le Mont Athos*, 92 and note 15. In the Romanian version Niphon began his monastic life in Koutloumoussiou; Năsturel, “Recherches,” p. 44.

60. K. Chryssochoides, “From the Ottoman Conquest to the 20th Century,” in *The Great and Holy Monastery of Vatopedi*, p. 59.

61. G. Salakides, *Sultansurkunden des Athos-Kloster Vatopedi aus der Zeit Bayezid II und Selim I* (Thessaloniki, 1995), pp. 71–4, 83–4 (document of 5th December 1508, referring to one of 22nd May 1504).

62. I remind here that Vatopedi was particularly cherished by the Serbian rulers, among other reasons because of its part in the monastic life of Saints Symeon and Sava; see B. Miljković, *Žitija Svetog Save kao izvori za istoriju srednjovekovne umetnosti* (Belgrade, 2008), pp. 42–58. See also M. Lascaris, “Actes serbes de Vatopedi,” *Byzantinoslavica* 6 (1935–1936), pp. 166–85; N. Oikonomidès, “Byzantine Vatopaidi: A Monastery of the High Aristocracy,” in *The Holy and Great Monastery of Vatopaidiou*, pp. 47ff, and 98–100, respectively; M. Živojnović, “Sava e le relazioni della dinastia Nemanja con il Monte Athos,” in *Atanasio e il monachesimo*, pp. 119–40. Serbian and Greek traditions consider that St. Sava was one of the founders of the monastery; see S. N. Kisas, “Predstava Svetog Save Srpskog kao ktitora manastira Vatopeda,” *Zbornik Matice Srpske za likovne umetnosti*, 19 (1983), pp. 185–99.

63. Dj. Sp. Radojčić, “Srpske arhivske i rukopisne zbirke na Sv. Gori,” *Archivist* 5, no. 2 (1955), pp. 3–28, here 8–10; E. Turdeanu, “Nouveaux documents concernant les dons roumains au monastère de Hilandar du Mont Athos,” *Revue des Études Roumaines* 3–4 (1955–1956), pp. 230–2; P. Ș. Năsturel, “Sultana Mara, Vlad Vodă Călugărul și începutul legăturilor Țării Românești cu mănăstirea Hilandar (1492),” *Glasul Bisericii* 19, nos. 5–6 (1960), pp. 498–502; Mircea, “Relations,” pp. 381–391 and 416–417; Năsturel, *Le Mont Athos*, 125–127; Al. Fotić, *Sveta Gora i Hilandar u Osmanskom carstvu XV–XVII vek* (Belgrade, 2000), p. 195. The document is published in *DRH. B*, vol. 1, pp. 377–80, no. 235 (Slavonic original and Romanian translation). See also B. I. Bojović (avec la collaboration de T. Jovanović, P. Ș. Năsturel,

et R. G. Păun), *Chilandar et les pays roumains (XVe–XVIIe siècles). Les actes des princes roumains des archives de Chilandar (Mont-Athos)*, (Paris, 2010), pp. 127–31, and *passim*.

64. See *Chilandar et les pays roumains*, pp. 439–41 (no. 271, March 1497), and 461–3 (no. 284, 9th April 1498); pp. 134–6 and 139–141 and 141–7 for other donations.

65. Popescu, “Nifon II,” pp. 761–4; Năsturel, “Recherches,” p. 43; Falangas, *Présences grecques*, pp. 150–151. See also A. D. Mavroudis, “Ἀγιος Νήφων, πατριάρχης Κωνσταντινουπόλεως. Ἀπὸ τὸν Μωρέα εἰς τὴν Ἀχρίδα,” in S. Kotzabassi and G. Mavromatis (eds.), *Realia Byzantina* (Berlin–New York, 2009), pp. 167–90.

66. His charter of 15th May 1510 proves he had seen the charter of his father Vlad the Monk, to which he explicitly refers and whose rhetoric he follows, *DRH. B*, vol. 2, pp. 151–5, no. 72. The document granted to the ex-*protos* Cosmas states that he presented to the prince “the letter and the charter” (писаніе и хрисовуль) he held from Radu the Great, *DRH. B*, vol. 2, pp. 147–51 (no. 71, 15th May 1510); *Chilandar et les Pays Roumains*, pp. 152–57.

67. He married one of Neagoe Basarab's daughters (later the wife of his half-brother Radu Paisie). However, his first grant to Hilandar dates even before this marriage; see *Chilandar et les Pays Roumains*, pp. 163–72; R. G. Păun, “La Valachie et le monastère de Chilandar au Mont Athos. Nouveaux témoignages (XVe–XVIe siècles),” *Medieval and Early Modern Studies for Central and Eastern Europe* 2 (2010), pp. 137–84. He also donated to Saint Paul, *DRH. B*, vol. 4, (1536–1550), ed. D. Mioc (Bucharest, 1981), pp. 10–1, no. 8; Fl. Marinescu, *Ρομανικά έγγραφα του Αγίου Όρους. Αρχείο Ιερὰς Μονῆς Αγίου Παύλου* (Athens, 2002), p. 52 (3rd March 1528); P. Zahariuc, “Date noi despre ctitorii mănăstirii Jitianu (Județul Dolj) și un document de danie pentru mănăstirea Sfântul Pavel de la Muntele Athos,” in idem, *De la Iași la Muntele Athos. Studii și documente de istoria Bisericii* (Iași, 2008), pp. 154–64, here 163–4.

68. *Chilandar et les Pays Roumains*, pp. 176–180 (27th February 1531).

69. V. Boškov, “Dokumenti Baezita II v Hilandaru (Sveta Gora),” *Priloži za orientalnou filologiju* 31 (1982), pp. 138–143 (5th–14th October 1481); Al. Fotić, “Despina Mara Branković and Chilandar: Between the Desired and the Possible,” in *Osam veka Hilandara. Istorija, duhovni život, književnost, umetnost i arhitektura* (Belgrade, 2000), pp. 93–100; idem, *Света Гора*, pp. 194–5. See also R. G. Păun, “Quelques notes sur les débuts des rapports entre la Valachie et le monastère de Chilandar au Mont Athos,” *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes* 46, nos. 1–4 (2008), pp. 151–64.

70. HM. SMS 510, f.117r (new numbering): въ лѣ #сѣпѣ, мѣѣа маѣа написане воѣвода Басѣраба млѣди оуѣгровлахѣискѣи гѣподарѣ въ стѣѣи помѣнникѣ. И мѣтанѣ сѣтворѣи да еѣ кѣторѣ стѣѣо хрѣма сѣго ~; Păun, “La Valachie et le monastère de Chilandar,” p. 144. The manuscript is described in D. Bogdanović, *Katalog ćirilskih rukopisa manastira Hilandara* (Belgrade, 1978), p. 192; P. Matejić and H. Thomas, *Manuscripts on Microform of the Hilandar Research Library (The Ohio State University)* (Columbus, Ohio, 1992), vol. 2, p. 587.



71. P. Lemerle, P. Wittek, "Recherches sur l'histoire et le statut des monastères athonites sous la domination turque," *Archives d'histoire du droit oriental* 3 (1947), pp. 411–72, here 424–6.

72. On the latter's donations, see B. Bojović, "Mont Athos, les princes roumains, Jean Castriot et la Tour albanaise (*Arbanaški pirg*), dépendance de Chilandar," *Balkanica* 37 (2007), pp. 81–9. Yet, no deed of Basarab the Younger to the Albanian Tower is known and his name does not appear in the memorial roll of the skete (HM SMS 519).

73. See *DRH. B*, vol. 2, pp. 304–6, no. 160.

74. *Istoria Țării Românești*, pp. 106–7.

75. See V. Nicolae, *Ctitoriile lui Matei Basarab* (Bucharest, 1981); N. Stoicescu, *Matei Basarab* (Bucharest, 1988), pp. 94–125.

76. Radu Șerban granted annual subsidies to Hilandar, *Chilandar et les Pays Roumains*, pp. 212–217 (24th June 1608). Matei Basarab's name, along with those of his wife, Elina, and his brother-in-law, Udriște Năsturel, feature in one of Hilandar's memorial rolls, which I address in a future study; see Năsturel, *Le Mont Athos*, p. 134; R. G. Păun, "L'ordre de l'éternité. Sur la mémoire liturgique du monastère de Hilandar (Mont Athos, XVIIe–XVIIIe siècles)," in idem (ed.), *Histoire, mémoire et dévotion. Regards croisés sur la construction des identités dans le monde orthodoxe aux époques byzantine et post-byzantine* (forthcoming). The Cantacuzinos' client, Antonie from Popești (1669–1672), also granted subsidies to Hilandar, *Chilandar et les Pays Roumains*, pp. 221–5 (26th November 1670). Șerban Cantacuzino dedicated his prominent foundation of Cotroceni to the entire Holy Mountain, Hilandar included (1682). His name is mentioned, along with those of his family and relatives, in the same memorial roll (HS. SMS 511) and an inscription on the manuscript of the Office for Saints Sergius and Bacchus (the patrons of his family) calls him "our ktetor"; E. Turdeanu, "Legăturile românești cu mănăstirile Hilandar și Sfântul Pavel de la Muntele Athos," *Cercetări Literare* 4 (1940), pp. 60–113, here pp. 97–99; Bogdanović, *Katalog*, p. 135; Matejić, Thomas, *Manuscripts*, vol. 1, p. 467, no. 325. No data exist yet about any donation by Constantin Brâncoveanu to Hilandar. The information in V. Căndea, *Mărturii românești peste hotare. Creații românești și izvoare despre români în colecții din străinătate*, vol. 2 (Bucharest, 2011), p. 505 (no. 1168), is still unconfirmed but was taken over by P. Cernovodeanu, "Constantin Brâncoveanu și Muntele Athos," *Revista Istorică* 8, nos. 3–4 (1998), pp. 116–8, and M. Lazăr, "Politica ctitoricească a domnilor Țării Românești (a doua jumătate a secolului al XVII-lea)," *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie* 19 (2001), pp. 79–108. However, Brâncoveanu's name features in the above-mentioned memorial roll, too.

77. Năsturel, *Le Mont Athos*, p. 248. It is revealing that Matei Basarab granted Saint Paul an annual subsidy (26th March 1639) following a deed of donation issued by "his ancestors"; he actually refers to a document produced by the Craiovescu brothers on 28th January 1501, p. 249. The memorial roll of the monastery (1674) mentions him and his wife among the *ktetors*; Turdeanu, "Legăturile românești," p. 90. Nedelea, second wife of Constantin Șerban, granted Saint Paul two villages in Wallachia; *Chilandar et les Pays Roumains*, pp. 225–7 (30th November 1686). It is likely that her husband also helped the Athonite Serbian monasteries. Brâncoveanu

also donated to Saint Paul; T. G. Bulat, "O danie neobișnuită făcută de Constantin Brâncoveanu mănăstirii Sfântul Pavel de la Athos," *Glasul Bisericii* 24, nos. 9–10 (1965), pp. 850–5; Marinescu, *Ρουμανικά έγγραφα . . . Μονής Αγίου Παύλου*, p. 94, no. 93; Ph. Kotzageorgis, *Η Αθωνική μονή Αγίου Παύλου κατά την οθωμανική περίοδο* (Thessaloniki, 2002), p. 34. It should be noted that many donations to Saint Paul were made through the monastery's *metochion* in Wallachia, the monastery of Jitianu, whose new founder was Princess Bălașa, the first wife of Constantin Șerban; see Zahariuc, "Date noi."

78. Radu Șerban granted annual subsidies to Mileșeva monastery (1604); E. Turdeanu, "Din vechile schimburi culturale dintre români și iugoslavi," *Cercetări Literare* 3 (1939) pp. 141–258, here 177. Matei Basarab did the same for three holy places in Bulgaria: SS. Peter and Paul church in Svišov, St. Paraskevi church in Vidin, and the Holy Trinity monastery in Târnovo; see C. C. Giurescu, "Două ctitorii ale lui Matei Basarab în Bulgaria," *Revista Istorică Română* 11–12 (1941–1942), pp. 390–1; V. Antonov, "Des vestiges roumains à Svišov," *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes* 16, no. 1 (1978), pp. 163–4; M. Kuyumdzhieva, "Some Remarks on Donations by the Wallachian Prince Matei Basarab in Bulgarian Territories," in Păun ed., *Histoire, mémoire et dévotion*. The latter also received donations from Șerban Cantacuzino, Constantin Brâncoveanu, and Ștefan Cantacuzino (1714–1716); see C. Velichi, "Documente și cărți românești din Bulgaria," *Revista Istorică* 22, nos. 4–6 (1936), pp. 112–21; P. Bojčeva, "Sur un acte de donation de Constantin Brâncoveanu à l'église orthodoxe de Târnovo," *Études balkaniques* 37, no. 1 (2001), pp. 71–9; Kuyumdzhieva, "Some remarks." In Serbian and Bosnian regions, Matei Basarab granted subsidies to monasteries in Trebinje, Paprača, Studenica, and Mileșeva; Turdeanu, "Din vechile schimburi," pp. 173 and 180; M. Romanescu, "Mile domnești în Srem și Hercegovina," *Arhivele Olteniei* 19 (1940), pp. 66–70; D. Mioc, "Materiale românești din arhive străine," *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie* 6 (1973), pp. 326–8; Gh. Lazăr, "Contribuții privind relațiile româno-sârbe pe baza unor documente de la mijlocul secolului al XVII-lea," *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie* 14 (1996), pp. 133–44. His name also features in the memorial roll of Sopočani; Turdeanu, "Din vechile schimburi," p. 173. Princes Antonie of Popești and Șerban Cantacuzino also donated to Mileșeva; S. Anuichi, "Sveti Sava u poveljama rumunskih vojvoda," in *Sveti Sava. Spomenica povodom osamsto godišnjice rođenja, 1175–1975* (Belgrade, 1975), pp. 361–6. The latter prince also helped Ravanica (1687) and his name features in the memorial rolls of Krušedol and Hopovo monasteries; Turdeanu, "Din vechile schimburi," pp. 178–9; O. Milanović-Jović, "Le Monastère Hopovo entre l'Athos et la Roumanie," *Zbornik Matice srpske za likovne umetnosti* 34–35 (2003), pp. 1–18. Brâncoveanu subsidised the monasteries at Trebinje, Ravanica, Mileșeva, Studenica, and Krušedol; Turdeanu, "Din vechile schimburi," p. 180; Mioc, "Materiale românești," pp. 328–32. In Bulgaria, he supported the monasteries of Holy Trinity at Târnovo, Saint Nicholas in Kapinovo and those of Prisovo and Lipnik; see P. Bojčeva, "Sur un acte de donation"; idem, "Un document de Constantin Brâncoveanu relatif au monastère de Kapinovo (Saint Nicolas) près de Târnovo," in P. H. Stahl ed., *Omagiu Virgil Căndea la 75 de ani* (Bucharest, 2002), vol. 1, pp. 97–107; P. Zahariuc, "În mijlocul străinătății. Două hrsoave de danie pentru mănăstirea Lipnic din Bulgaria,"



in idem, *De la Iași la Muntele Athos*, pp. 209–21. The oldest extant bede-roll of Rila monastery names Brâncoveanu among the benefactors; see I. Gergova, "Das älteste Gedenkbuch des Rila-Klosters," *Bulgarian Historical Review*, 36, nos. 1–2 (2009), pp. 164–79. Prince Ștefan Cantacuzino confirmed donations made by his relatives and predecessors to Studenica; Turdeanu, "Din vechile schimburi," p. 182.

79. Turdeanu, "Din vechile schimburi," p. 158; M. M. Székely, "Pe marginea unei corespondențe pierdute. Mănăstirea Kosinitza și Țările Române," in O. Cristea, P. Zahariuc, and Gh. Lazăr (eds.), *Aut viam inveniam aut faciam. In honorem Ștefan Andreescu* (Iași, 2012), pp. 417–39; Fl. Marinescu, "Sfântul Neagoe Basarab și ajutorul său către biserici din Răsăritul Ortodox"; N. Moraru, "Daniile Sfântului Voievod Neagoe Basarab către așezămintele ortodoxe din Balcani"; T. Teoteoi, "Neagoe Basarab, inițiator al binefacerilor românești către o mănăstire din Macedonia Orientală, Kosinitza sau Cusnița din *Viața Sfântului Nifon*," all in *Sfântul voievod Neagoe Basarab*, pp. 81–97, 127–151, and 115–127, respectively. His name features in the memorial rolls of Dečani, Sopočani, Lesnovo, Pčinja, and Krušedol; Turdeanu, "Din vechile schimburi," pp. 160, 189–90; Mircea, "Relations," p. 390; M. Tomić and M. Voiculescu, *Поменик манастира Крушедола* (Belgrade, 1996); S. Anuichi, "Pomelnicele mănăstirii Krušedol și relațiile cu Biserica Ortodoxă Română," *Mitropolia Banatului* 32, nos. 4–6 (1982), pp. 322–31; M. Timotijević, "Sremski despoti Brankovići i osnivanje manastira Krušedola," *Zbornik za likovne umetnosti* 27–28 (1991–1992), pp. 127–50; D. Novakov, "Arheografski opis Pomenika Manastira Krušedola (XVI–XVII vek)," *Arheografski prilozi* 31–32 (2009–2010), pp. 467–500.

80. It is thought that he founded the monasteries of Vratna and Manastirica; Mircea, "Relations," p. 386; M. Nedeljković, "Manastir Manastirica u predanju i istoriji," *Saopštenja* 17 (1983), pp. 155–160. It is certain that he contributed, together with his uncle Gherghina, to the foundation of the Lapušnja monastery (1500–1501); G. Balș, "O biserică a lui Radu cel Mare în Serbia, la Lopušnja," *Buletinul Comisiei Monumentelor Istorice* 4 (1911), pp. 194–9; B. Knežević, "Ktitori Lapušnje," *Zbornik za likovne umetnosti* 7 (1971), pp. 37–54; idem, "Manastir Lapušnja," *Saopštenja* 18 (1986), pp. 83–114. According to some traditions, the monastery of Rakovica was also renewed by a Wallachian prince called Radu, most probably the same Radu the Great; B. Knežević, "Prilog datovanju crkve manastira Rakovice," *Saopštenja* 17 (1983), pp. 161–6. His name features in the memorial rolls of Krušedol, Dečani, and Pčinja (together with those of his wife Cătălina, his father Vlad the Monk, and Vlad's wife Maria); E. Turdeanu, "Din vechile schimburi," pp. 152 and 189–91; Mircea, "Relations," p. 386; Tomić, Voiculescu, *Pomenik*, p. 11. He is also credited with refounding the monastery of Kremikovci, near Sofia; Turdeanu, "Din vechile schimburi," p. 151.

81. See I. C. Filitti, "Despina, princesse de Valachie, fille présumée de Jean Brankovitch," *Revista Istorică Română* 1, no. 3 (1931), pp. 241–3; I. R. Mircea and P. Ș. Năsturel, "De l'ascendance de Despina, épouse de Neagoe Basarab," *Romanoslavica* 10 (1964), pp. 435–7; C. Nicolescu, "Princesses serbes sur le trône des Principautés Roumaines. Despina-Militza, princesse de Valachie," *Zbornik za likovne umetnosti* 5 (1969), pp. 97–129; Pleșia, "Neagoe Basarab."

82. It is interesting to note that Vlad the Monk married Basarab the Younger's widow, Maria; see Pleșia, "Genealogia Basarabilor." We may wonder whether she played any role in the attention both princes paid to Hilandar.

83. Andreescu, "Alianțe dinastice," p. 680. The presence in Wallachia of Salomon Crnojević (d. 1521, in battle against the Turks), son of Djuradj, prince of Montenegro (1490–1496), seems to offer some indirect proof here. It should be noted that the last ruler, Ștefan Crnojević (1496–1498), took shelter on Mount Athos, while another member of the same family, Marko, became a monk at Hilandar, whence he submitted several requests for a *firman* in defence of the monastery's interests; see Boškov, "Dokumenti Baezita II," pp. 135–8; Al. Fotić, "Hilandar's response to crisis and new challenges in the 15th and 16th centuries," in *To Αγίον Όρος*, p. 134; idem, *Sveta Gora*, pp. 30–1, and 182–8.

84. Turdeanu, "Din vechile schimburi," pp. 149–50; Mircea, "Relations," p. 385; Năsturel, *Le Mont Athos*, p. 127.

85. See Mircea, "Relations," p. 385; G. Mihăilă, "Viața și slujba lui Maxim Branković. Momentul 1507 în letopisețele românești," in idem, *Între Orient și Occident. Studii de cultură și literatură română în secolele al XV-lea—al XVIII-lea* (Bucharest, 1999), pp. 198–223; S. Tomin, "Archbishop Maxim Brankovic. Supplement to understanding of Serbian-Romanian relationships at the beginning of the 16th century"; O. Cristea and L. Pilat, "Le moine, la guerre et la paix: un épisode de la rivalité moldo-valaque au début du XVIe siècle," both in *Medieval and Early Modern Studies for Central and Eastern Europe* 1 (2009), pp. 107–21 and 121–41, respectively.

86. P. P. Panaitescu, "Octoiul lui Macarie (1510) și originile tipografiei în Țara Românească," *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* 57, no. 1 (1939), pp. 2–28.

87. Păun, "La Valachie et le monastère de Chilandar." See also Șt. Ștefănescu, "Éléments nobiliaires balkaniques établis en Valachie à la fin du XVe siècle," *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire* 8, no. 5 (1969), pp. 891–7.

88. Mircea, "Relations," p. 391; Tomić and Voiculescu, *Pomenik*, p. 11.

89. She was known as the "Despotovna," i.e., "daughter of the Despot" or "daughter of Ioan the despot," and used these styles herself; see Mircea, "Relations," p. 392.

90. K. Nevostruev, "Tri hrisovulje u Hilandaru," *Glasnik Srpskog Učenog Društva* 8 (25) (1869), pp. 272–87, here 285–7; see also Năsturel, *Le Mont Athos*, pp. 137–8. This is not however a chrysobull, but rather, as the text indicates, *повеление и затис* (disposition and letter).

91. See Năsturel, *Le Mont Athos*, pp. 246 and 250; Kotzageorgis, *Η Αθωνική μονή Αγίου Παύλου*, p. 33.

92. Turdeanu, "Din vechile schimburi," p. 160; Mircea, "Relations," p. 392. His name also featured in the commemoration roll of the monastery of Kosinitza; see Teoteoi, "Neagoe Basarab," pp. 142–3. It is more difficult to explain why his name, along with those of his wife and father, Ștefan the Great, should be present in the *Synodikon of Tsar Boril*; the explanation must lie in Moldavia's ecclesiastical links with certain centers on Bulgarian territory; see Turdeanu, "La littérature bulgare," pp. 144–7; I. Božilov, A. Totomanova, and I. Biliarsky, *Borilov sinodik. Izdanie i prevod* (Sofia, 2010), p. 356.

93. Șt. Andreescu, *Restitutio Daciae. Relațiile politice dintre Țara Românească, Moldova și Transilvania în răstimpul 1526–1593* (Bucharest, 1980), pp. 76–105; Pippidi, *Tradiția*, pp. 158–65.



94. The point at which the male line of the Branković died out; M. Spremić, "La famille serbe des Branković. Considérations généalogiques et héraldiques," *Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta* 49 (2004), pp. 441–52.

95. Nevostuev, "Tri hrissoulje," p. 286. Both phrases are identically found in a charter granted by Petru the Lame (who owed his throne to the Ottomans!) to the same monastery in 1583; *Chilandar et les Pays Roumains*, pp. 203–5; see also Fotić, *Sveta Gora*, p. 196.

96. Mircea, "Relations," p. 397, note 92. Alexandru's name also features in the memorial roll of Saint Paul's monastery, Năsturel, *Le Mont Athos*, p. 250; Kotzageorgis, *H Αθωνική μονή Αγίου Παύλου*, p. 34, note 31.

97. D. Petrović, "Mnogoljetstvije rumunskom vojvodi Jovanu Aleksandru," *Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta* 13 (1971), pp. 345–52; A. E. Pennington, "A Polychronion in Honour of John Alexander of Moldavia," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 50, no. 118 (1972), pp. 90–9; Pippidi, *Tradiția*, p. 168; E. Turdeanu, "Autori, copiiți, cărți, zugrăvi și legători de manuscrise în Moldova 1552–1607" (I), *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie "A. D. Xenopol" Iași* 1552–1607 (1984), pp. 49–90. The *Lives* of the Serbian rulers and archbishops also circulated in Moldavia; see I. R. Mircea, "Les Vies des rois et des archevêques serbes et leur circulation en Moldavie," *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes* 4, nos. 3–4 (1966), pp. 394–412.

98. On the Serbian tradition in Moldavia, see Pippidi, *Tradiția*, pp. 52ff, 151–71; M. Cazacu and A. Dumitrescu, "Culte dynastique et images votives en Moldavie au XVe siècle. Importance des modèles serbes," *Cahiers balkaniques* 15 (1990), pp. 13–102.

99. HM. SMS 510, f. 133r (new numbering). It was by mistake that I have dated this document on 27th July 1556 and thus attributed it to prince Alexandru Lăpușneanul; see R. G. Păun, "La Moldavie de Ștefan le Grand (1457–1504) et le monastère de Hilandar au Mont Athos. Témoignages et hypothèses," *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes* 50, nos. 1–4 (2012), pp. 167–90, here 169–70, and 188 (fig. 1). See now idem, "La Moldavie de Ștefan le Grand (1457–1504) et le monastère de Hilandar au Mont Athos. Une rectification nécessaire," *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes* 51, nos. 1–4 (2013), pp. 423–6. I beg the reader to take into account this correction. In any case, we have to amend the assertion that "the first Moldavian voyvode known to have assumed the *ktetorship* was Petre Rareș" (p. 135), as maintained by Fotić, "Hilandar's response to crisis," p. 135.

100. See Păun, "La Moldavie de Ștefan le Grand," p. 189 (fig. 2). We can rule out the years in which Ștefan was at open war with the Ottomans (1475–1476). On the other hand, it seems quite certain that Ștefan's ties to Athos went beyond what we can precisely define today. Thus, for example, when Isaija, abbot of Hilandar, traveled to Russia in 1489, he arrived through Moldavia; see B. de Khitrowo, *Itinéraires russes en Orient*, vol. 1 (Geneva, 1889), pp. 259–67. It is hard to believe that he did not visit the princely court at Suceava, or that once he visited it, he would have left empty-handed.

101. HM. SMS 519, f. 6r (new numbering), 2r (original numbering); see Păun, "La Moldavie de Ștefan le Grand," pp. 177–8, and 190 (fig. 3).

102. We have only two documents from Ștefan's chancery at all between 5th June 1475 and 10th August 1477; Șt. S. Gorovei and M. M. Székely, *Princeps omni laude maior. O istorie a lui Ștefan cel Mare* (Sfânta Mănăstire Putna, 2005), p. 143.

103. Năsturel, *Le Mont Athos*, p. 183. The document is published in *DRH. A*, vol. 2, pp. 192–4, no. 135.

104. *DRH. A*, vol. 1 (1384–1448), eds. C. Cihodaru, I. Caproșu, and L. Șimanschi (Bucharest, 1975), pp. 196–8; Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps*, p. 58.

105. The concern for his own succession is evident when we consider that these documents are the only ones to mention Eudokia throughout her marriage to Ștefan; see C. Rezachevici "Neamul doamnei Evdochia de Kiev, în legătură cu descoperirea pietrei sale de mormânt la Suceava," in *Atlet al credinței*, pp. 113–33, here 122.

106. She left two-thirds of her estates to Hilandar and the rest to Saint Paul. There was a second will issued in 1469; R. Ćuk, "Povelja carice Mare manastirima Hilandar i Sv. Pavlu," *Istorijski časopis* 24 (1977), pp. 103–16; idem, "Carica Mara," *Istorijski časopis* 25–26 (1978–1979), pp. 95–115.

107. Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps*, p. 58. On the importance of Putna, see especially M. M. Székely, "Mănăstirea Putna—loc de memorie," in *Atlet al credinței*, pp. 37–71.

108. Dated some time after the victory at Baia over Mathias Corvinus (December 1467); see L. Șimanschi, *Începutul elaborării cronicii lui Ștefan cel Mare, în Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt. Portret în istorie* (Sfânta Mănăstire Putna, 2003), pp. 238–5; Șt. Andreescu, "Les débuts de l'historiographie en Moldavie," *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire* 12, no. 6 (1973), pp. 1017–35; idem, "Cronica lui Ștefan cel Mare: înțelesurile unei întreruperi," in idem, *Istoria Românilor: cronicari, misionari, cititori* (sec. XV–XVII) (Bucharest, 1997), pp. 118–29.

109. Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps*, pp. 47–9.

110. On this aspect, see Șt. S. Gorovei, "1473—un an-cheie al domniei lui Ștefan cel Mare," in *Portret în istorie*, pp. 389–395; Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps*, pp. 93–8.

111. This date (1475) must be reconsidered in view of the political context. In 1475, Ștefan was waging war against the Porte, so that we should consider the years 1473/74; Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps*, pp. 139–40.

112. On this aspect, see especially M. M. Székely and Șt. S. Gorovei, "„Semne și minuni” pentru Ștefan voievod. Note de mentalitate medievală," *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie* 16 (1998), pp. 49–64 [collected in *Portret în istorie*, pp. 67–86]; Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps*, pp. 48, 74–5.

113. Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps*, pp. 93ff.

114. See D. Dinić-Knežević, "Sremski Brankovići," *Istraživanja* 4 (1975), pp. 19–44; S. Ćirković, "Poslednji Brankovići," in *Istorijski časopis* 24 (1977), pp. 445–64; M. Spremić, "Srpski despoti u Sremu," in M. Maticki ed., *Srem kroz vekovite. Slojevni kultura Fruške Gore i Srema* (Belgrade, 2007), pp. 45–73.

115. Șimanschi, "Începutul elaborării cronicii"; Andreescu, "Cronica lui Ștefan cel Mare."

116. In the Volovăț church; see Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps*, pp. 95–6; idem, "Moldova și regalitatea sacră," in *De potestate. Semne și expresii ale puterii în Evul*



*Mediu românesc* (Iași, 2006), pp. 179–214, here 205–14. We shall not examine here the imperial dimension of the deeds of Ștefan's reign, which these authors propose.

117. E. Turdeanu, "L'activité littéraire en Moldavie à l'époque d'Étienne le Grand (1457–1504)," in idem, *Études de littérature*, pp. 113–60. In general, see G. Mihăilă, "Istoriografia românească veche (sec. al XV-lea–începutul sec. al XVII-lea) în raport cu istoriografia bizantină și slavă"; and "Sintagma (Pravila) lui Matei Vlăstariș și începuturile lexicografiei slavo-române (secolele al XV-lea–al XVII-lea)," both in idem, *Contribuții la istoria culturii*, pp. 104–64 and 261–307, respectively.

118. Năsturel, *Le Mont Athos*, pp. 249–50.

119. In 1496–1497 abbot Paisij of Saint Panteleimon accompanied the Moldavian envoy to Moscow; it is hard to credit that Ștefan made no donation to this monastery, especially given that Radu the Great of Wallachia did so; see Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps*, p. 306. See also M. Bošković, "Stroenie atoskog manastira Svetog Pantelejmona u ruskim letopisima," *Zbornik na Matidže srpske za slavistiku* 62 (2002), pp. 25–62.

120. Năsturel, *Le Mont Athos*, pp. 249–50; Kotzageorgis, *H Αθωνική μονή Αγίου Παύλου*, p. 33. The last Branković donation to Saint Paul, from Hungary, seems to have been that of 3rd November 1495; D. Sindik, "Srpske povelje u svetogorskom manastiru Svetog Pavla," *Mešovita Gradja* 6 (1978), pp. 202–3; K. Mitrović, "Povelja despota Đorđa, Jovana i Angeline Branković manastiru Svetog Pavla," *Stari Srpski Arhiv* 6 (2007), pp. 209–20.

121. Năsturel, *Le Mont Athos*, pp. 241–3 and 244–5. See also Turdeanu, "Legăturile românești," pp. 68–72, and particularly Crețeanu, "Traditions de famille." We should also mention here Neagoe's grants to the monastery of Saint Paul. Here too, Radu the Great was the first to donate to the house, and once again Neagoe and the Craiovescu family lagged behind their rival. Năsturel is tempted to see a transfer of patronage here, much like the transfer of Hilandar from Mara to Vlad the Monk; *Le Mont Athos*, pp. 241–3.

122. The former *protos* of Holy Mountain, Cosmas of Hilandar, was very active in the region and benefited from the favor of the Wallachian princes in particular. We have no information to indicate that Cosmas ever visited Moldavia; he is recorded however in Wallachia and Hungary, and together with the *starec* Josef of Hilandar persuaded the despots Djuradj and Jovan Branković, with their mother Angelina, to donate to Hilandar (in the year 7004 of Creation, thus between 1st September 1495 and 31st August 1496); M. Spremić, *Brankovići i Sveta Gora*, in *Druga kazivanja o Svetoj Gori* (Belgrade, 1997), pp. 93–8; Fotić, *Sveta Gora*, pp. 187–8; *Chilandar et les pays roumains*, p. 36.

123. Șt. S. Gorovei, "Maria Despina, Doamna lui Radu cel Frumos," *Analele Putnei* 2, nos. 1–2 (2006), pp. 145–52. Cazacu and Dumitrescu consider that the princess's entourage was composed of Southern Slavs; "Culte dynastique," 47. At the same time, 1474–1475, Jovan Crnojević, brother-in-law to Gergj Arianiti Comnen, was leading the resistance to the Ottomans in Zeta and on the Albanian coast; J. V. A. Fine, *The Late Medieval Balkans: Critical Survey from the Late Twelfth Century to the Ottoman Conquest* (Ann Arbor, 1994), p. 599.

124. M. I. Sabados, "Le don du voïvode Ștefan Lăcustă de Moldavie à l'église des Serbes de Constantinople," *Zograf* 28 (2000–2001), pp. 139–42.

125. M. Cazacu, "Projets et intrigues serbes à la Cour de Soliman (1530–1540)," in G. Veinstein (ed.), *Soliman le Magnifique et son temps* (Paris, 1992), pp. 511–28; idem, "Stratégies matrimoniales et politiques des Cantacuzène de la Turcocratie (XVe–XVIe siècles)," *Revue des Études Roumaines* 19–20 (1995–1996), pp. 157–81.

126. Cazacu, "Stratégies," p. 167; Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps*, p. 262; A. Eșanu and V. Eșanu, "O ipoteză privind căsătoria lui Alexandru, fiul lui Ștefan cel Mare," in A. Eșanu and C. Iordan (eds.), *Cultură și politică în Sud-Estul Europei* (Chișinău, 2011), pp. 8–15.

127. It has been thought that Ștefan Lăcustă was the son of Alexandru, son of Ștefan the Great; Șt. S. Gorovei, "Ștefan Lăcustă," in L. Șimanschi ed., *Petru Rareș* (Bucharest, 1978), pp. 161–74. I myself accepted this hypothesis; see Păun, "La Moldavie de Ștefan le Grand." Some historians admit the relation between Lăcustă and Alexandru but doubt that the latter was in fact the son of Ștefan the Great; M. Diaconescu, "Peșitorii nepotei lui Ștefan cel Mare în 1517. Despre căsătoria lui Alexandru cu fiica lui Bartolomeu Drăgfi," *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie "A. D. Xenopol"* 49 (2012), pp. 55–70; my thanks to the author for showing me the working draft of his article. Other historians again consider that Ștefan the Great had two sons named Alexandru: one who died in Moldavia in 1496, and was married to the daughter of voivode Bartolomeu Drăgfi of Transylvania, and another by some other relationship who was sent as hostage to the Porte, where he died and was buried in the Pammakaristos church, at the time the seat of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. This second Alexandru would then have been Lăcustă's father; see Al. Simon, "*Quello ch'è apresso el Turcho*. About a Son of Stephen the Great," *Annuario. Istituto Romeno di cultura e ricerca umanistica* 6–7 (2004–2005), pp. 141–69. M. Cazacu considers that this Alexandru married a kinswoman of Mihail Cantacuzino, father of "Shaytanoglu," "Stratégies," pp. 160–4. The same opinion is presented in D. I. Mureșan, "Bizanț fără Bizanț? Un bilanț," *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie* 26 (2008), pp. 285–324, here 296–7. In my opinion there is not enough evidence to support Cazacu's hypothesis; further, some of his arguments have since been undermined. See also C. Cihodaru, "Pretendenții la tronul Moldovei între anii 1504–1538," *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie "A.D. Xenopol" Iași* 14 (1977), pp. 105–8; D. I. Mureșan, "La visite canonique du patriarche Pacôme Ier dans les Principautés roumaines (1513) et le modèle davidique du sacre," in *Sfântul Voievod Neagoe Basarab*, pp. 25–63. Constantin Rezachevici does not comment on this aspect, but sees Lăcustă as a member of the Moldavian dynasty; *Cronologia*, pp. 567–75.

128. M. I. Sabados, "Sur un portrait votif inédit de Bistrița-Neamț," *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes* 30, nos. 1–2 (1993), pp. 89–96. Lăcustă was assassinated by his own boyars (1540) and Kneajna, who died two years later, was given a burial befitting a princess in the monastery church at Bistrița, a princely foundation to which Ștefan Lăcustă's rival, Prince Petru Rareș, was uncommonly devoted. Some historians believe that Lăcustă himself was also buried there, which is not impossible. If indeed the case, this confirms that he was a member of the ruling dynasty, Rezachevici, *Cronologia*, vol. 1, pp. 574–5. It is also thought that Alexandru, putative son



of Ștefan the Great and father of Ștefan Lăcustă, is buried at Bistrița; see Gorovei, "Ștefan Lăcustă," p. 163; Rezachevici, *Cronologia*, vol. 1, pp. 574–5.

129. Lăpușeanul claimed to be the (illegitimate) son of Bogdan the One-Eyed (cel Chior, 1504–1517), himself a son of Ștefan the Great and the only Moldavian prince of this period for whom we have no proven connection with the Serbian world. However, Bogdan granted gifts to the Rila monastery, the most important center of Bulgarian monasticism; see St. Nicolaescu, "Un acoperământ de porfiră și aur dăruit Bulgarilor monasticism; see St. Nicolaescu, "Un acoperământ de porfiră și aur dăruit Mănăstirii Rila din Bulgaria de Bogdan voievod, domnul Țării Moldovei. 10 martie 1511," *Arta și Arheologia* 9–10 (1933–1934), pp. 4–5; E. Turdeanu, "La broderie religieuse en Roumanie. Les étoles des XVe et XVIe siècles," *Buletinul Institutului Român din Sofia* 1, no. 1 (1941), p. 56. It has recently been proposed that he did the same for Kosinitsa, where Mara Branković is buried; Székely, "Pe marginea unei corespondențe." However, Bogdan's name does not feature in the monastery's memorial roll; Teoteoi, "Neagoe Basarab." Other authors hold that Bogdan financed building work at Saint Paul; G. Subotić, "Manastir Svetog Pavla," in *Kazivanja o Svetoj Gori* (Belgrade, 1995), pp. 114–42, here 136; Kotzageorgis, *Η Αθωνική μονή Αγίου Παύλου*, p. 33. It has also been stated that Maxim Branković was consecrated bishop in Moldavia during Bogdan's reign; L. Pilat, "Mitropolitul Maxim Brancovich, Bogdan al III-lea și legăturile Moldovei cu Biserica sârbă," *Analele Putnei* 6, no. 1 (2010), pp. 229–38; A1. Simon, "Descrerea Moldovei sub Bogdan III și 'ridicarea' Țării Românești sub Neagoe Basarab," in *Sfântul Voievod Neagoe Basarab*, pp. 431–61, here 432. The opposite opinion is presented by Mureșan, "La visite canonique," p. 37.

130. After Basarab's death (1482), Mara was considered by the Ottoman authorities the hereditary *ktetor* of the monastery, as indicated by a ferman delivered by Bayezid II in 1485; see V. Boškov, "Mara Branković v turskim dokumentima iz Svete Gore," *Hilendarski Zbornik* 5 (1983), pp. 189–214, here 206.

131. K. Mitrović, "Povelja Despota Đorđa Brankovića o prihvatanju kitorstva ad Hilandarom. 1486, mart 20, Kupinik," *Stari srpski arhiv* 5 (2006), pp. 229–39, here 231 (original) and 232 (copy).

132. Idem, "Povelja Despotice Jelene Jakšić Manastiru Hilandar 1503, Juni 11, Budim," *Stari Srpski Arhiv* 7 (2008), pp. 195–203, here 197. See also Spremić, "Brankovići i Sveta Gora, AE pp. 95–6.

133. Năsturel, *Le Mont Athos*, pp. 130–1; *Chilandar et les Pays roumains*; Păun, "La Valachie et le monastère de Chilandar."

134. After the early death of Jovan Branković, his widow Jelena (daughter of Dimitrije Jakšić) married Ivaniša Berislavić, who thereby "inherited" the title; see Spremić, "Généalogie," p. 446.

135. For a general overview, see A1. Elian, "Legăturile Mitropoliei Ungrovlahiei cu Patriarhia de Constantinopol și cu celelalte Biserici ortodoxe (de la întemeiere până la 1800)," in idem, *Bizanțul, Biserica și cultura românească. Studii și articole de istorie*, V. V. Muntean ed. (Iași, 2003), pp. 141–80.

136. See mainly Gorovei and Székely, *Prinsep*; L. Pilat, "Autocefalia Mitropoliei Moldovei în secolul al XV-lea. Concept eclesiologic și realități politice"; idem, "Vizita Patriarhului Ioachim I și statutul Bisericii din Moldova la începutul secolului

al XVI-lea," both in idem, *Studii privind relațiile Moldovei cu Sfântul Scaun și Patriarhia Ecumenică (secolele XIV–XVI)* (Iași, 2013), pp. 141–67 and 239–47.

137. D. I. Mureșan and P. Ș. Năsturel, "Du καθολικὸς βασιλεὺς à l'αὐθέντες καθολικὸς. Notes sur les avatars d'une idée politique," in E. Popescu, T. Teoteoi, and M. O. Cățoi (eds.), *Études byzantines et post-byzantines*, vol. 6 (Bucharest, 2011), pp. 251–82, here 259, note 37. See also D. I. Mureșan, "Patriarhia ecumenică și Ștefan cel Mare. Drumul sinuos de la surse la interpretare," in V. V. Muntean ed., *În memoria lui Alexandru Elian. Omagiere postumă a reputatului istoric și teolog, la zece ani de la trecerea sa în veșnicie (8 ianuarie 1998)* (Timișoara, 2008), pp. 87–180; idem, "Le Mont-Athos aux XVe–XVIe siècles. Autour de quelques descriptions d'époque," in E. Băbuș, I. Moldoveanu, and A. Marinescu (eds.), *The Romanian Principalities and the Holy Places along the Centuries* (Bucharest, 2007), pp. 81–121. Although he takes over some conclusions from earlier research, this author has lost sight of Dionysia Papachryssanthou's warning about the situation after 1312: "Il faut se garder de penser que, le *prôtos* étant dorénavant sous la *dépendance spirituelle* du patriarche, il y eut un transfert de responsabilité de l'empereur sur la personne du patriarche [. . .] tous les privilèges de la Montagne restent inviolables," (my emphasis); see *Actes de Prôtaton*, ed. D. Papachryssanthou (Paris, 1975), p. 127. We may add here that some of the foreign (primarily Western) sources that the author uses are of only limited relevance.

138. See R. Clogg, "The Greek Millet in the Ottoman Empire," in B. Braude and B. Lewis (eds.), *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*, vol. 1, *The Central Lands* (New York, 1982), pp. 185–207; P. Konortas, "From Ta'ife to Millet: Ottoman Terms for the Ottoman Greek Orthodox Community," in Ch. Issawi and D. Gondicas (eds.), *Ottoman Greeks in the Age of Nationalism: Politics, Economy, and Society in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton, 1999), pp. 169–179.

139. Reference is made here to the *berat* delivered by Bayezid II, in 1483. The document is published by E. A. Zachariadou, *Δέκα τουρκικά έγγραφα για την Μεγάλη Εκκλησία (1483–1567)* (Athens, 1996), pp. 157–62 (original and Greek translation); Salakides, *Sultansurkunden*, pp. 33–8 (original and German translation), 48–65 (commentary).

140. Konortas, *Les rapports juridiques et politiques*, pp. 170 ff, 192, 419, 426–7.

141. It has been stated that the act of 1312 was confirmed and reinforced on 5th December 1498 by Patriarch Joachim I, proving that the Athonites were fully subordinate to the Great Church; Mureșan, "Le Mont-Athos"; idem, "Bizanț fără Bizanț?," p. 288. The story is actually more complicated. The *protos* Cosmas went unexpectedly to Constantinople and asked Patriarch Joachim I to "renew" the so-called "old *typikon*" of the Holy Mountain, thereby proving that he had an interest in this affair. As the texts of the *typikon* and the confirmation delivered by Joachim indicate, this interest was *not* to subordinate the Athonite community to the Patriarchate, but rather to obtain official confirmation of the privileges and broad autonomy the Athonites already possessed *de facto*. As has been convincingly shown, the "old *typikon*" that Cosmas presented to the Patriarch and that the latter finally confirmed was in fact a forgery; it is hard to believe that anyone would produce a forgery to claim inferior



status. Besides, it is not sure at all that the patriarchal act of 1498 renewed the 1312 *typikon* but rather a so-called *typikon* of 1394; see D. Papachryssanthou, *Η διοίκηση του Αγίου Όρους* (1600–1927) (Athens, 1999), pp. 14–6; D. G. Apostolopoulos, *‘Ο Ἱερὸς Κῶδιξ τοῦ Πατριαρχείου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως στὸ Β’ μιστὸ τοῦ ΙΕ’ αἰῶνα. Τὰ μόνα γνωστὰ σπαράγματα* (Athens, 1992), pp. 163–5; idem, “Τὸ Ἅγιον Ὄρος στὰ σωζόμενα πατριαρχικά ἔγγραφα τῆς πρώτης μετὰ τὴν Ἄλωση περιόδου (1454–1500);” K. Chryssochoides, “Παραδόσεις καὶ πραγματικότητες στὸ Ἅγιον Ὄρος στὰ τέλη τοῦ ΙΕ’ αἰῶνα καὶ στὶς ἀρχὲς τοῦ ΙΣΤ’ αἰῶνα,” both in *Ο Ἄθως στους 140–160 αἰῶνες* (Athens, 1997), pp. 89–98, here 96–8, and pp. 99–147, here 99–108, respectively; D. G. Apostolopoulos, “Σχέσεις τοῦ Πατριαρχείου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως με τὴν Ἀθωνικὴ κοινότητα: Ἀπὸ τὴν κρίση στὴν εξομάλυνση,” in *Τὸ Ἅγιον Ὄρος στὸν 15ο καὶ 16ο αἰῶνα*, pp. 193–8. It also should be noted that the authority of the *protos* himself had declined and “remained weak throughout the fifteenth century,” which means that monasteries had a quite important degree of freedom in their moves. The act of 1498 aimed precisely to strengthen the *protos*’s authority; Smyrlis, “Mount Athos in the Fifteenth Century,” p. 47.

142. Apostolopoulos, “Σχέσεις,” pp. 46–7. It has been pointed out that the Athonites “generally adapted their message of mutual legitimation and tacit alliance, their political loyalties and their outward social values to suit those of the conqueror”; J. C. Alexander (Alexandopoulos), “The Lord Giveth and the Lord Taketh Away: Athos and the Confiscation Affair of 1568–1569,” in *Ο Ἄθως στους 140–160 αἰῶνες*, pp. 149–200, here 150. See also *Actes de Lavra*, vol. 4, *Études historiques. Actes serbes, complements et index*, P. Lemerle, A. Guillou, N. Svoronos, and D. Papachryssanthou (eds.), (Paris, 1982), p. 46.

143. Konortas, *Les rapports juridiques et politiques*, p. 350. Tellingly, the Patriarchate played no part whatsoever in the case of the confiscations of 1568/69; see Alexander, “The Lord Giveth”; Al. Fotić, “The official explanations for the confiscation and sale of monasteries (churches) and their estates at the time of Selim II,” *Turcica* 26 (1994), pp. 33–54.

144. Konortas, *Les rapports juridiques et politiques*, p. 368.

145. Konortas, *Les rapports juridiques et politiques*, p. 364. The same obtains where any kind of conflict occurred between the church hierarchies of different confessions, or in the case of property disputes between laymen and clergy, despite whatever spiritual sanctions the Great Church threatened; pp. 369 and 379. The obvious example is that of Maria-Jelena, niece of Mara Branković; see V. Demetriades and E. A. Zacahariadou, “Serbian Ladies and Athonite Monks,” *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 84 (1994), pp. 35–53; I. Beldicea-nu-Steinherr, “Les illusions d’une princesse. Le sort des biens de Mara Branković,” in S. Prător and Ch. K. Neuman (eds.), *Frauen, Bilder und Gelehrte. Studien zu Gesellschaft und Künsten im Osmanischen Reich* (Istanbul, 2002), vol. 1, pp. 43–59; Dj. Tošić, “Posljednja bosanska kraljica Mara (Jelena),” *Zbornik za Istoriju Bosne i Hercegovine* 3 (2002), pp. 29–60, here 55–59. See also Al. Fotić, “Non-Ottoman Documents in the Kādis’ Courts (*Môloviya*, Medieval Charters): Examples from the Archive of the Hilandar Monastery (15th–18th c.);” E. Kolovos, “Negotiating for State Protection: Çiflik-Holding by the Athonite Monasteries (Xeropotamou Monastery, Fifteenth–Sixteenth

Century),” both in C. Imber, K. Kiyotaki, and R. Murphey (eds.), *Frontiers of Ottoman Studies: State, Province, and the West*, vol. 2 (London and New York, 2005), pp. 63–75 and pp. 197–211, respectively.

146. Konortas, *Les rapports juridiques et politiques*, pp. 372–5.

147. Tellingly, in one such *firman* of 1589, the travelling monks (*taxidiotai*) are included in the category of “state tax collecting”; Al. Fotić, “Athonite Travelling Monks and the Ottoman Authorities (16th–18th Centuries),” in *Perspectives on Ottoman Studies. Papers from the 18th Symposium of the International Committee of Pre-Ottoman and Ottoman Studies (CIEPO) at the University of Zagreb 2008*, E. Čaušević, N. Močanin, and V. Kursar (eds.), (Berlin, 2010), pp. 157–65, here 158–9.

148. The number of works devoted to this topic is considerable; I will mention only a few. The “imperial idea” is argued by P. Ș. Năsturel, “Considérations sur l’idée impériale chez les Roumains,” *Byzantina* 5 (1973), pp. 395–413; D. Năstase, *L’héritage impérial byzantin dans l’art et l’histoire des Pays Roumains* (Milan, 1976); idem, “L’idée impériale dans les Pays Roumains et ‘le crypto-empire chrétien’ sous la domination ottomane. Etat et importance du problème,” *Σύμμεικτα* 4 (1981), pp. 201–51; idem, “La survie de l’Empire des Chrétiens sous la domination ottomane. Aspects idéologiques du problème,” in *Atti del III Seminario internazionale di studi storici Da Roma alla Terza Roma* (Rome, 1983), pp. 459–471; idem, “Imperial Claims in the Romanian Principalities from the Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Centuries. New Contributions,” in L. Cloucas (ed.), *The Byzantine Legacy in Eastern Europe* (New York, 1988), pp. 185–224; idem “Ștefan cel Mare împărat,” *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie* 16 (1998), pp. 65–102; Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps*; D. I. Mureșan, “De la Nouvelle Rome à la Troisième: le rôle des Principautés Roumaines dans la transmission de l’idée impériale,” in A. Castaldini (ed.), *L’eredità di Traiano. La tradizione istituzionale romano-imperiale nella storia dello spazio romeno* (Bucharest, 2008), pp. 123–67. For different points of view, see Val. Al. Georgescu, “L’idée impériale byzantine et les réactions des réalités roumaines (XIVe–XVIIIe siècles),” *Byzantina* 3 (1971), pp. 311–39; Pippidi, *Tradiția*; R. G. Păun, “L’idée impériale et les anciennes chroniques roumaines. Repères pour une histoire impossible,” *Méditerranées* 26–27 (2001), pp. 175–211; Șt. Andreescu, “L’idea imperiale nei Principati romeni. Una teoria e la sua critica,” in *L’eredità di Traiano*, pp. 167–74. Recently a difference has been emphasized between κτίτωρ (“fondateur”) and κτήτωρ (“propriétaire”) and stated that: “Aucun souverain post-byzantin ne pouvait se poser toutefois ni en tant que ‘fondateur’ ni en tant que ‘propriétaire’ de tout l’Athos. Une troisième acception du terme *ktetor* se dégage donc à cet endroit, qui est celle plus générale de ‘patron’ de tel lieu saint ou de telle institution ecclésiastique”; see D. I. Mureșan and P. Ș. Năsturel, “Du καθολικὸς βασιλεὺς,” pp. 279–80 and note 125. I agree with this distinction, although it is not clear at all what “patron” means in this context. Whatever the case may be, the two authors insist on Neagoe Basarab’s (and on all the Wallachian princes’) patronage over the entire Mount Athos.

149. D. Năstase, “Le patronage du Mont Athos au XIIIe siècle,” *Cyrrilomethodianum* 7 (1983), pp. 71–87; idem, “La signification cachée des documents athonites,” *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik* 32/2 (1982), pp. 257–267; idem, “Les débuts de la communauté œcuménique du Mont Athos,” *Σύμμεικτα* 6 (1985), pp.



251–314; idem “‘Necunoscute’ ale izvoarelor istoriei românești,” *Anuarul Institutului de istorie “A. D. Xenopol”* 30 (1993), pp. 491–5; Biliarsky, “Saint Constantin.”

150. The only independent source to say any such thing refers to Ștefan the Great, but this is not an official one; rather it is Western, a statement by the Venetian chronicler Marino Sanudo; see Șt. Andreescu, “Ștefan cel Mare ca protector al Muntelui Athos,” *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie “A. D. Xenopol” Iași* 19 (1982), pp. 652–3. On Ștefan as protector of the entire Athos, see, among others, I. Moldoveanu, “Sfântul Ștefan cel Mare, protector al Muntelui Athos,” in *Atlet al credinței*, pp. 157–79; Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps*, pp. 47–9, 305–8; 390–1; Mureșan, “Le Mont-Athos,” p. 119.

151. Recent research has argued that when patronage over the monastery of Zographou was passed “des derniers Assenides aux Bogdănești” (i.e., the Moldavian rulers) this also meant that the Moldavian princes, especially Ștefan the Great, took over the Bulgarian “imperial idea”; Mureșan, “Zographou et la transmission.” This is not the place to expound all the author’s arguments; we will merely remark that in neither Alexandru Aldea of Wallachia’s charter of donation (9th February 1433), nor that of Ștefan II (26th May 1442), is Zographou called “the monastery of My Lordship;” see *DRH. B*, vol. 1, pp. 136–37, no. 74 and *DRH. A*, vol. 1, pp. 311–2, no. 221, respectively. On the latter charter, see Năsturel, *Le Mont Athos*, pp. 180–2. Strangely, Mureșan does not comment at all on the idea of the Serbian legacy in Moldavia argued by Cazacu and Dumitrescu (see “Culte dynastique,” especially pp. 28–30, 45–6), although he refers to this article elsewhere as a fundamental work unfairly ignored in Romanian historiography; see Mureșan, “Bizanț fără Bizanț,” p. 309, note 67.

152. Lemerle and Wittek, “Recherches,” pp. 424–6. I followed the transcription by Fotić, *Sveta Gora*, p. 196.

153. Lemerle and Wittek, “Recherches,” pp. 436–41 (23rd–31st May 1527).

154. Lemerle and Wittek concluded: “Ces princes valaques apparaissent donc comme les protecteurs héréditaires du monastère,” “Recherches,” p. 441. For the view that the sultans saw the voivode of Wallachia as an institutional role and were not interested in who occupied the throne at any given moment or from what branch of the dynasty a prince came, see Năsturel, *Le Mont Athos*, pp. 331–2.

155. Zachariadou, “Ottoman Documents,” pp. 8–10.

156. Salakides, *Sultansurkunden*, pp. 73–4 and 83–4. The inverted kommas the author uses in his translation of the Ottoman terms are telling.

157. Boškov, “Dokumenti Baezita II v Hilandaru,” pp. 138–9; Fotić, *Sveta Gora*, pp. 194–5; *Chilandar et les pays roumains*, pp. 43–4 (I cannot understand why Koutloumousiou and Hilandar are placed in the same category).

158. Boškov, “Dokumenti Baezita II v Hilandaru,” pp. 138–9; V. Boškov and D. Bojanić, “Sultanske povelje iz manastira Hilandara,” *Hilandarski Zbornik* 8 (1991), pp. 167–213, here 176 (15th–24th July 1513); Fotić, *Sveta Gora*, pp. 194–5. Süleyman the Magnificent confirmed the situation in 1523, but this time no particular name of a Wallachian prince was mentioned; Boškov, “Dokumenti Baezita II v Hilandaru,” p. 139.

159. A. Popescu (“Muntele Athos și românii—punctul de vedere otoman,” in I. Căndea, P. Cernovodeanu, and Gh. Lazăr (eds.), *Închinare lui Petre Ș. Năsturel la 80*

*de ani* [Brăila, 2003], pp. 151–8, here 155 and 157) to a great extent takes over the conclusions of Năsturel (*Le Mont Athos*, pp. 330–3), nevertheless emphasizing that no Romanian prince could assume the title attached to the Muslim rulers of Constantinople, i.e., that of successor to the Byzantine emperors, and that Romanian donations to Athos were only possible within the framework of Islamic law and in conformity with the Sultan’s will. Popescu does not use the Ottoman documents on Hilandar.

160. V. Barbu, Gh. Lazăr, and O. Olar, “Reforma monastică a domnului Matei Basarab,” *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie* 30 (2102), pp. 9–55, here 17. The authors state that “as Paul Lemerle, Eleni (?) Zachariadou and Nicoară Beldiceanu have convincingly shown, the Romanian princes were also ‘administrators and guarantors for the Athonite monasteries,’ a function which the Ottoman tax documents treat as equivalent to that of administrator for a religious foundation (*mutevvelli vaqf*).” I have shown above that Elisabeth (not Eleni!) Zachariadou claims quite the contrary. Lemerle and Wittek consider the wording of the document of 1491 “malheureusement trop vague pour qu’on puisse en déduire la situation juridique du voivode vis-à-vis de ‘son’ monastère” and advance the very cautious conclusion that: “S’il s’agit, dans le cas de Qutlumus, d’un *vaqf*, le voivode *serait* alors une sorte de *mütewelli* du monastère” (my emphasis), “Recherches,” p. 429. Beldiceanu seems more categorical and considers that the Wallachian princes acted in this respect as *mütewelli*; “En marge d’une recherche concernant les relations roumano-athonites,” *Byzantion* 50 (1980), pp. 617–23, here 620–2. However, if the first document published by Lemerle and Wittek clearly mentions that Koutloumousiou “depended” on the Wallachian prince, the second says nothing about the type of relation between the two; Lemerle and Wittek, “Recherches,” pp. 422 and 433–6. In any case, Beldiceanu overgeneralizes on a quite precarious ground. See also Fotić, *Sveta Gora*, p. 196, note 9; *Chilandar et les pays roumains*, p. 40.

161. For the significance of this sage, see Pippidi, *Tradiția*, pp. 24–7. A different opinion is expressed by Năstase “Sfințirea,” pp. 90–1.

162. I remind the reader that both the last Branković living in Hungary and some Athonite monks addressed the Russian monarchs as protectors of the Holy Mountain; see Fotić, *Sveta Gora*, pp. 207–8, and the documents published in S. M. Kashtanov, *Россия и гречески ј мур в XVI веке*, vol. 1 (Moscow, 2004).

163. When Neagoe Basarab was asked to intervene in the lawsuit between Koutloumousiou and Pantocrator, he acted in his capacity as patron of the first monastery and *not* as patron of the whole Athos. Tellingly, he took no decision in the matter but left the affair to the Athonite authorities to resolve; *Actes de Kutlumus*, pp. 166–9 (January 1518).

164. See Păun, “La Valachie et le monastère de Chilandar.”



## Chapter 11

### The Center of the Periphery

#### *The Land of Bosnia in the Heart of Bosnia*<sup>1</sup>

Jelena Mrgić

The “center–periphery” model was introduced to historical research from economic studies during the second half of the last century, and it provided a new approach to this phenomenon. In regard to the Byzantine Empire, the term “center” applies in the first instance to Constantinople, as the Second Rome, the seat of the Emperor and the whole Christian *oecumene*. Besides its political, ideological, and cultural significance, the City was the highest ranking economic center, to which most of the resources were directed. The second ranking was Thessalonica, much closer to the interior of Central Balkans.<sup>2</sup>

The majority of historical geography studies of medieval Bosnia observe only the final results of a variety of intricate processes, stages of which are almost impossible to pinpoint, both in time and place. This is, of course, the consequence of extremely limited sources and the scarcity of the evidence they yield, along with their chronological and territorial inconsistency. In comparison to other European and non-European regions, historians of medieval Bosnia lack, to a greater or lesser extent, material from royal, feudal, and city archives. Missing are all population, settlement, and taxation records, while cartographic images and visual sources (manuscript illustrations and reliefs carved in *stećci* tombstones<sup>3</sup>) are pretty meager—to name just a few basic categories. One may well wonder to what extent it really is possible to comprehend and, further, to reconstruct this medieval society.

There is more than one way around this basic problem of how to compensate the overall lack of evidence and to make the picture more complete. There are several theoretical approaches with diverse analytical tools, concepts, and methods, which could provide new insights into political, social, economic, and cultural mechanisms, patterns and processes, and in the end, to achieve new scientific results.



On the nature of historical knowledge and how we come by it, Robin Collingwood once said: *All history is the history of thought*, that is, all of the past is the present re-thinking the past.<sup>4</sup> Two historical geographers extended this premise—*all historical geography is the history of thought with a bearing on human activity on land* (L. Guelke) and even more radical—*all geography is historical geography* (C. H. Darby). This interpretation points the fact that before they acted, humans had to have a system of theoretical approaches on which they organized their behavior in natural environment, resulting in actions or “forms” that are visible through the curtain of historical sources.<sup>5</sup> Beside recorded history, there is, however, the deep history of humankind, where natural and geo-sciences are involved in historical reconstruction.<sup>6</sup>

Historical geographers aim to understand, unravel and reconstruct the spatial behavior of individuals and communities, to discover the structure of their spatial organization, their system of evaluation of geographical space, including environmental, social and cultural preferences and values, decision-making processes and how certain society handled the outcomes of those decisions and actions. From a decennial distance, we now return to a paper, written in 2003, entitled “Rethinking the Territorial Development of the Mediaeval Bosnian State,” but with greater understanding, knowledge, skills, and experience, regarding regional historical geography of the mediaeval and early modern Bosnia. Some recent texts deal with more environmental history issues, closely connected to the problems of historical geography and its methodology.<sup>7</sup>

The lack of evidence forces us to hypothesize historical processes in comparison with similar societies, both in the immediate vicinity of Bosnia and further afield, as Marc Bloch has pursued and promoted in his studies. Further, historians apply a regressive approach, moving from documented results (“forms”) then backtracking to the past. From the standpoint of a scholar, the most important thing is to become an *omnivore* in regard to the methodology and types of sources, to use as many as one could think of in pursuit of the re-creation (or better yet, *la résurrection de la vie intégrale*, as Jules Michelet put it) of past societies and their environment.<sup>8</sup>

A prerequisite step would be to completely reject the prevailing notion of the medieval Bosnian state as a “special case,” a sort of totally unique political and social feature, because it is based almost exclusively on the phenomenon of its vague and obscure religious affiliation to the heretical Bosnian church. Furthermore, interpretations of this religious “organization” are still extremely biased and anachronous. Leaving these matters aside, medieval Bosnia proves to be a typical feudal state and society, without denying or depriving it of certain unique features. That said, and accepting the initial “ideal model” of a feudal state society with an agrarian pre-modern economy, further comparisons can be made.

First choice for *per analogiam* observations would be medieval Serbia, because of the similar geophysical composition, and original Slavic and Serbian population, the fact that had influenced the initial land colonization (*Landnahme*). This was based upon environmental preferences and evaluation of natural and cultural surroundings, and it induced development of settlement patterns and spatial organization, according to the social, economic and cultural concepts.<sup>9</sup> Second, after placing medieval Bosnia in a wider geographical, that is, regional context of the Central Balkans and Southeastern Europe, it seems obvious to investigate documented relations and the already observed influences of Bosnia’s neighbor—the Kingdom of Hungary, on its political, social, economic, cultural, and religious life.<sup>10</sup>

Third, in spite of the fact that prior to acquisition of the territory known today as Herzegovina, the Bosnian state was in a position of “a continental land-lock,” one cannot overlook the vicinity of Adriatic port communes of Dubrovnik, Split, and Zadar to Bosnia. These urban centers acted as mediators in *translatio* of Greek, Roman, Byzantine, and Mediterranean civilization and heritage to the Balkan hinterland. A dense road network emerged as early as in Illyrian times, later paved by the Roman Empire and its officials, such as Cornelius Dolabella, governor of Dalmatia province. Archaeological remains of several pre-Romanesque basilicas in Vrutci (near the source of the River Bosnia) and nearby Blažuj testify to strong cultural and economic connections with Adriatic towns, where the skilled craftsmen and stonemasons were hired. The process evolved in the opposite direction, too—girls and boys from Bosnia found employment as maids, servants, and apprentices in coastal towns. They were sometimes fleeing from hunger, sometimes forcefully taken away as *ancillae* and *servi* by slave lords (*robci*), on the pretext that they were “heretics.” Anyway, this medieval world was in constant motion, a fact that is often overlooked by historians.<sup>11</sup>

The place of medieval Bosnia within the boundaries of the history and civilization of the Byzantine “Commonwealth” is, needless to say, highly marginal, compared again to medieval Serbia. The territory itself presented an area without any geo-strategic, political, or economical significance to the Empire for most part of its millennium history (Map 1).<sup>12</sup> All written records of Bosnia in the Byzantine historical sources are already well known, providing little information, though disproportionally of high significance to Bosnian history. This scant evidence is chronologically and spatially scattered from the tenth to the fifteenth centuries, and shall be addressed briefly for the purpose of this text, together with evidence of different provenance.

The aforementioned “continentality” of Bosnia was an enduring feature of its history, from the tenth to the fourteenth centuries, strongly influencing its development. A process of escaping from it could be observed, with phases of territorial thrusts toward the Adriatic coast and retreats, following the high



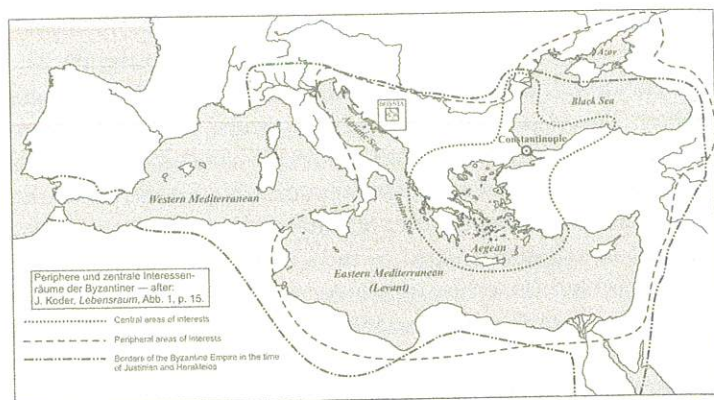


Figure 11.1 Position of medieval Bosnia in the context of the Byzantine Empire's areas of interests as demarcated by Johannes Koder (1984) Source: Created by Johannes Koder.

and low tides of the Bosnian state power. On the grounds of military superiority, the Grand Bosnian ban Matija (Stephen) Ninoslav (before 1233–ca. 1250) was summoned to Split and elected Count of its commune in 1244. This would be hard to achieve if he had not been the overlord of the whole territory lying between Bosnia and Split, connected with the Roman roads *Salona–Servitium*, and *Salona–Sirmium*. Soon afterwards, however, Bosnia began its political decline and eventually, fell into a period of feudal anarchy. As a result, the transitory areas between the Valley of Vrbas River and the Central Dalmatian coast were abandoned.<sup>13</sup>

Due to the geomorphologic composition of the land, its relief and vegetation, the inhabitants of Bosnia had probably shared some features of a “high-lander” mentality, comparable to, let us say, Central Wales or the Scottish Highlands.<sup>14</sup> In regard to Bosnian state composition, political and administrative organization, the “land” of Bosnia of the Kotromanić Dynasty was the state core, its “heart.” In contrast to Serbia, medieval Bosnia had never achieved a higher degree of government centralization, which would suppress the autonomous feelings and actions of provincial feudal lords in their *pays* (P. Vidal de la Blanche<sup>15</sup>). Gathered at the “stanak” (state assembly), representatives of the most powerful and influential Bosnian noble families with their own *Männerbunds* (“bratija”) had always succeeded in limiting the central authority of the ruler and very often exerted full control and appropriating regalian rights (*dominium eminens et iura regalia*) on their feudal domains. Those *barones regni* chose the Bosnian ruler at the “stanak” from the members of the royal dynasty of Kotromanić. The strength of the central government depended heavily on the personal authority of the ruler, as well as his wealth and the support of the loyal nobility. The Bosnian state

seemed, during most of its history, to balance on the brink of disintegration and feudal wars.<sup>16</sup>

Turning to the issue of medieval Bosnia's *spatial organization*, this implies first the military control over the territory, its mental (in the form of the “mental maps”) and administrative division from the largest to the smallest territorial units. Territoriality is the basic geographical expression of social power, binding space, and society. In fact, human spatial relations are the results of a complex interplay of multi-level relations both within the society and between society and its territory. An outline would be the following:

Bosnia (state, *rusag* < Hung. *ország*)

↑

“lands” (*pays*, *Landschaften*, *zemlje*, historical and geographical regions)

↑

“districts” (counties, *župas*)

↑

agrarian/rural and urban settlements.

It is necessary to have in mind that the process of building societal, political, and governmental structure began from the initial binding of rural settlements, connected in a network at the local level, with a nearby *refugium* and local market place. The second-level network would be that of “districts,” the third—the “lands.”<sup>17</sup>

Actually, the oldest Byzantine reference to Bosnia is at the same time as the first evidence of its spatial organization. In the well-known chapters of Constantine Porphyrogenitus's “De administrando imperio,” Bosnia is referred to as a “chorion” within the territory of the state termed “baptized Serbia.” There were two “inhabited towns” (*castra oecumena*)—Kotor and Desnik, still not precisely located in the area of fertile plains at Sarajevo and Visoko, in the upper flow of the River Bosna. Based on previously acquired knowledge in the reconstruction of spatial organization of the medieval Slavic and Serbian lands, it could be assumed that each of these two cities had the role of center of a “county,” in Slavic *župa*. But the unique reference to *chorion Bosona* probably implies that a more spacious territorial unit—a Vidalian *pays*, a medieval Slavic and Serbian *zemlja*—the “land” of Bosnia, was constituted at this time, composed of at least these two counties—Vrhbosna and Bosna at that time. This was the heart of the future state, its core-area.<sup>18</sup>

*Zemlja*—“land” denominated what is popularly termed *region* in geography, that is, a territorial entity, a geographically distinguished and homogenous area which is to a point self-sufficient and can support its inhabitants from the local resources and production, thus economically exercising a semi-autarchy. Recognizing and organizing regions within a state has always



been an ongoing process, depending on geographical features, population density, social and economic structure, and so on. The point is that modern-day regions usually do not fit the pre-modern picture, and while it is clearly the case with late medieval Herzegovina (known as "stara Hercegovina") and modern geographical region of Herzegovina,<sup>19</sup> it would be necessary to examine the case of the medieval "land" of Bosnia and Central Bosnia region. A number of geographers during the previous century, starting with Jovan Cvijić, have dedicated texts to the issue of geo-economical regions in general, and of Federal Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in particular. They all acknowledged that not only natural (environmental) and geographical features, but also human-induced changes and activities (historical, economical, cultural) have created several homogenous regions, and they all singled out Central Bosnia as such a region.<sup>20</sup>

Besides theoretical approaches, another important thing to consider would be the view from within, that is, the *local geographical consciousness* of people, their feeling of belonging to a region different to surrounding areas, their "sense of place" and the mental division of geographical space. This has been recorded in many parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina by historians and anthropogeographers, so for the inhabitants of the *nahiye* Visoko, the "true Bosnia" denoted the river basin of Bosnia up to the town of Žepče, slightly north from the Vranduk gorge. According to medieval sources, the town of Kladanj on the River Drinjača, was considered to be in the "land" of Usora. The range of high and densely wooded mountains of Konjuh, Zvijezda, and Romanija separates Bosnia from Podrinje, another region and the medieval "land." In the area of the town of Višegrad, people declared that Glasinac plateau was not in Bosnia, since Bosnia was, according to their opinion, "on the other side of the Romanija Mountain, towards Sarajevo." The western and southern borders of Central or "true" Bosnia are clearly distinguished, composed of massive mountainous barriers (Vranica, Bitovnja, Ivan-planina, and Bjelašnica), which are watersheds of the Rivers Vrbas and Neretva, respectively. Therefore, people in the area of Gornji Vakuf (near the medieval town of Susjed, in the upper Vrbas valley) considered it not as Bosnia, but as the part of "Kraji" (Krajina), as ethnographer Nikola Pavković recorded.<sup>21</sup>

And again it was a Byzantine source that related evidence on Serbian land of Bosnia reaching the level of statehood. John Kinammos wrote that ban Borić (c. 1154–c. 1164) was the ruler of the "Dalmatian land of Bosnia," ("the ruler of Bosnia, a Serbia region"—as translated by Ch. M. Brand), and emphasized that it was not subjected to the rule of "archizupanos" of Serbia, "but is a tribe which lives and is ruled separately" (Ch. M. Brand). The Bosnian state bordered Serbia in the east along the valley of River Drina, as stipulated in both Kinammos' and in the Annals of the Priest of Diokleia. The earliest territorial acquisitions of Bosnia were in the direction of least

resistance—to the west and the valley of River Vrbas, where prior to 969, a Bosnian ruler acquired the districts of Uskoplje, Pliva, and Luka. According to the same source, the King of Diokleia, Constantine Bodin (ca. 1080–ca. 1099), had sent from his court a certain Stephen 1083/84 to rule Bosnia in his name, while brothers Vukan and Marko were sent to Raška, where a new dynasty was consequently established by their successors. Another Stephen was mentioned as the former Bosnian ban and father of Sibislav(us), count of Usora (ca. 1236–ca. 1245), the main opponent to the Grand Bosnian ban Matija (Stephen) Ninoslav.<sup>22</sup>

The Emperor Manuel Komnenos (1143–1180), who in 1165 introduced Bosnia in his imperial title, probably installed the Bosnian ban Kulin (prior to 1180–ca. 1204) upon his throne. Besides popular historical memories of the "good old days" during the reign of ban Kulin, there are indications that a certain level of economic, social and cultural prosperity was actually achieved, followed by territorial reorganization of the state. According to the preserved inscription in stone, ban Kulin had erected a church in Biskupići (near Visoko), with his portrait as the founder (*kititor*) above the entrance ("postavi svoj obraz nad pragom"). This happened after he had helped Stephan Nemanja in 1182 to plunder the Byzantine areas south of Sava River, referred to as "Kučevsko Zagorje." The problem of identification of this particular area has only recently been solved upon early Ottoman sources—it was the area of Kosmaj Mountain with several silver mines, worth plundering. Mavro Orbini mentioned another two churches erected in Bosnia at the time of ban Kulin, but besides the Bosnian ruler, other members of the state administration were also involved. The Grand Judge of Bosnia Gradeša had founded a family church of St George in Podbrežje (near Zenica). Further, material remains of another basilica near Zenica (Bilimišće), with the altar piece and apse on its eastern side, have been dated to the twelfth century.<sup>23</sup>

Considering the fact that ever since the death of the Emperor Manuel until the third decade of the fourteenth century, political circumstances were hindering the chances for the Bosnian state to expand its territory, it could be assumed that new acquisitions, testified to by thirteenth-century sources, should be attributed to the Grand Bosnian ban Kulin. Turbulent international events and the crucial shift of powers in the Eastern Mediterranean and Southeastern Europe, which are the topic of this conference volume, certainly affected Bosnia, though not as much as Serbia.

In his charter from 1249, the Grand Bosnian Ban Matija (Stephen) Ninoslav stipulated three *kaznacs* (*camerarii*, financial officials), each one for a particular "land" in his state—Bosnia, Donji Kraji (*Partes inferiores*), and Usora (Northern Bosnia). The state was divided into shared (co-ruled) principalities (*česti*), with pro-Catholic count Sibislav in Usora and *vicebanus* Prijezda in Donji Kraji. Prijezda was also termed as the "consanguineous" of the



Great Bosnian Ban, that is, related by blood, which gave right to Prijezda to be elected (ca. 1250) for the next Bosnian ruler. According to Pope Gregory IX, Sibislav, the son of the former Bosnian ban Stephen, distinguished himself as a catholic among the heretics "quasi lilium inter spinas." So, one might think that an echo of the first fall of Constantinople in 1204 could be Kulin's disappearance, his dethroning in favor of a more pro-Western, that is, pro-Hungarian candidate, such as Stephen. In regard to state organization, the core-area of Bosnia was the "land" of Bosnia as the seat of the Grand Ban, the Grand Judge, the Grand *Kaznac*, and the Grand Bosnian *Voyvoda*. Undoubtedly based upon the demographic and economic rise, expressed in the military power of his state, ban Matija attempted the acquisition of the Adriatic coastal areas of Central Dalmatia and the immediate hinterland, thus providing the escape from the continental "semi-autarchy" of the Bosnian state. Gaining access to the Adriatic, that is, Mediterranean international trade and natural resources (salt, fish, wine, olive oil, finer textiles, and arms, lucrative goods, etc.), economically complementary with this continental ecological zone (fresh and dried meat, furs and hides, wax, grains, etc.), became a long-lasting political aim of Bosnian rulers.<sup>24</sup> Here we just want to add that economy, and trade in particular, of medieval Bosnia should be thoroughly reconsidered, since several outstanding studies and conference volumes have been published, regarding the Mediterranean basin, Byzantine Empire and beyond. They offer valuable and fresh interpretations, models and ideas which should be taken into account.<sup>25</sup>

At the time of ban Matija, there was an attempt to establish the Catholic Church more securely, with a Bosnian bishop and a number of parishes. According to the charter of the Hungarian King Béla IV (1235–1270), the Bosnian ban confirmed in 1244 the land possessions of the newly founded Bosnian Catholic bishopric. The list of Catholic churches and identification of settlement locations is hindered by the poor Latin transcription of Slavic settlement names. A note of caution: Catholic Church parishes have to be treated differently to socioeconomic and territorial units such as "districts"/*župas*, since the aim of parish networks was to encompass all members of the "flock," all Christians, regardless of their place of living. *Župas*, on the contrary, presented areas of milder climate, suitable for agricultural production, mainly of bread crops, fruits, and viticulture, and therefore their geographic location was determined by ecological conditions, placing them in the lowlands, up to 500–700 meters, depending on the average ground elevation.<sup>26</sup>

Toponyms are good evidence in historical geography research, and could help making the difference between these two territorial divisions visible.<sup>27</sup> The village of *Stomorine* has never been mentioned in medieval written sources, nor has any significant archaeological material ever been recovered on its territory. Nevertheless, its name is derived, as our distinguished linguist

Aleksandar Loma determined, from "Sancta Maria" / "Sveta Marija," that is, the church dedicated to the Holy Mary, Mother of God. *Stomorine* is situated on a (nowadays) barren and deforested plateau ca. 1000m of ground elevation on the right bank of the River Ljubinja, high above the fertile plain of Visoko; thus no place for agricultural activity with *župa* formation. However, the charter of 1244 stipulates "Vidgossa Lubinchi"—Vigoš(t)a Ljubinci, as a parish with a church. Again, we can turn to linguistic evidence—a small creek of *Sutmaj* (< *Sutmar* < *Sancta Maria*) joins River Ljubinja in the close proximity. Further, the remains of a medieval church with several necropolises of *steći* have been uncovered near the confluence of *Sutmaj* and Ljubinja, in the village of Gora.<sup>28</sup> Evidence thus points to the presence of a Christian population with the cult of Saint Mary, perhaps in the form of two churches, one dedicated to the holiday of her Birth (*Mala Gospojina*), the other to her Ascension (*Velika Gospojina*), placed in *Stomorine* and Gora. What is interesting to observe is the close proximity of the medieval mining site of lead ore named accordingly—*Olovo*, some five to ten kilometers from *Stomorine*. In addition to our direction of thought, we would like to remind the readers that Aleksandar Loma has proposed identification of Porphyrogenitus' *Desnik* with *Daštansko*, which was a mediaeval silver mine and settlement in the same area.<sup>29</sup> The cult of St. Mary was very strong in *Olovo*, where the Franciscan church was founded during the fourteenth century (prior to 1385/90), but more importantly, the annual fair (*panagyris* > *panadjur*) continued to be gathered on the holiday of the Ascension until modern times, long after the church was destroyed.<sup>30</sup>

This would have two important implications: one is to reconsider the existence and the organization of the orthodox (i.e., Orthodox and Catholic) Christian Church and secondly, the possibility of a much earlier presence of the (Catholic) Saxon miners in medieval Bosnia, that is, at least as early as in Brskovo in Serbia (*terminus post quem* 1246), if not a little earlier (ca. 1244). The development of mining in Bosnia should certainly be dated long before the first written record from 1339. The highest concentration of gold, silver, and lead mines was in the center of the state, in the "land" of Bosnia (*Kreševo*, *Hvojnica*/*Fojnica*, *Ostružnica*, *Busovača*, *Olovo*, etc.), where the medieval production followed the traces from the Roman era.<sup>31</sup> The lease (*emptio*) of these mines and trade in precious metals was the foundation of the Bosnian ruler's wealth, besides his land possessions, and also the main reason for merchants from Dubrovnik, Kotor, Split, Venice, and Zadar to make their business there, in the expectation of high income on the international, Mediterranean markets.<sup>32</sup>

The same charter from 1244 also reveals the names of proper territorial "districts" / *župas*, bearing the names of the River Bosnia's tributaries and situated in their valleys: *Vrhbosna* (*Vrh*—above, i.e., the area of Bosnia



River sources), *Lepenica*, *Lašva*, and *Brod* (environs of Zenica, named after the river ford), along with *Prača*—left tributary of the River Drina, *Uskoplje* in the valley of Vrbas, and *Neretva*—in the environs of today Konjic. The foundation of the Cathedral of St. Peter “in Brdo in Vrhbosna” implies that this location should be regarded as a central place with the highest number of Christians, otherwise it would be pointless to take on such an endeavor. Therefore, it should be sought in the area of Blažuj, on the ground of the highest concentration of archaeological sacral evidence and the settlement’s position at the juncture of three important roads leading from the Adriatic coast and entering here the field of Sarajevo. The fact that an early sixteenth-century Orthodox manuscript was written “in the place called Vrhbosanje, that is Sarajevo” should be interpreted as a late *translatio* of the name from the source of the River Bosnia to the east and the valley of the River Miljacka, where the foundations of the future *shehir Sarajevo* were laid only after the Ottoman conquest. The significance of Sarajevo and its rapid urban development toward the Valley of River Bosnia was so overwhelming at that time (1516), that it is quite understandable why the people (or at least, the copyist of this manuscript) had merged these two names. Though the central district—*župa Bosna* is not stipulated in written sources, there can be no doubt that it was positioned in the field of Visoko, where the highest concentration of Bosnian court places was, as revealed in the next phase (Map 2).<sup>33</sup> Serbian cultural influences were also present, as testified by an Orthodox liturgical manuscript, now preserved in Vatican. It was copied by Desoje, the same one as Desoje the “good scribe of the Ban” who wrote the charter of Matija Stephen Ninoslav in 1235/39, and this manuscript shows great similarities to Vukan’s Gospel.<sup>34</sup>

And so, by the thirteenth century, the “land” of Bosnia was organized as a geographical, political, and economic unit, and recognized as the “heart” of Bosnia. It consisted of a number of “counties” / *župas*—Bosna, Vrhbosna, Lepenica, Lašva, Brod, and Prača. During the late medieval period, *župa Trstivnica* emerged in the surroundings of two courts of the Bosnian Kingdom—Bobovac and Kraljeva Sutjeska. The royal domain—“il paese del re” or “*vilayet-i Kiral*” did encompass the former territorial unit, the “land” of Bosnia as its most precious foothold, but these two were not identical. Borders of the king’s domain changed as his power increased and decreased during feudal wars with the Bosnian *barones regni* in the first half of the fifteenth century. This was accompanied by excursions of the Hungarian and Ottoman armies, as well as political interventions. International trade routes developed to the south and southwest towards the Adriatic coast, and in the north towards the Hungarian Kingdom. During times of uncertainties, traffic diverted from arteries to capillary flows, that is, from main routes to subsidiary and back roads in Bosnia, as well as in other medieval states. There can be little doubt

that the northwest–southeast connection, known as “Bosanski drum” in Ottoman times when B. Kuripešić traveled, had not been present much earlier, binding the valley of Bosnia with the valleys of River Drina and Lim.<sup>35</sup>

Stjepan (Stephen) II Kotromanić (1318/22–1353), grandson of the Serbian King Stephen Dragutin, was of great significance to Bosnian medieval history. Judged by his achievements in state reorganization, centralization, and international *renomé*, he could be easily compared both to his senior, the Hungarian King Charles I Robert of Anjou (1301/10–1342), and to the Serbian King Stephen Uroš II Milutin (1282–1321). His strong and determined personality, wisdom, and skillfulness in pursuing long-term political goals enabled him to create a respectable state which permanently encompassed the Adriatic coast from the River Cetina to Dubrovnik, and, more loosely, the right bank of the River Sava. His authority as the supreme *dominus* (*gospodin*) of the Bosnian noblemen was indisputable. Like the Nemanjić rulers, Stjepan issued charters for his faithful vassals and for Dubrovnik in the form of his *grace* (*milost, gratia*). Hungarian and Western European influences could be detected more visibly in his time. His *intitulatio* was fashioned accordingly, composed of all the “lands” of Bosnia that he governed: Bosnia, Usora, Soli, Donji Kraji, and Hum. The marriage of his daughter Jelisaveta with the Hungarian King Luis I the Great (1342–1382) made Stjepan’s accomplishments in international politics quite distinguished.<sup>36</sup>

On the other hand, increased Byzantine influence is observable during Stjepan’s successor—ban, and from 1378, King Stephen Tvrtko I (1353–1391), not directly but through mediation of the medieval Serbian, that is, Nemanjić ideology and legacy. Seizing the crown of “Serbs and Bosnia,” he grounded his claim upon his dissension from King Dragutin’s daughter, further, the extinction of the main branch of Nemanjić Dynasty, and the fact that the Serbian throne was empty at that time. Tvrtko introduced Byzantine state officials, such as *protovestarius* (*comes camerarius*) and *logothet* (*cancelarius*, chancellor), but also *miles* (knight, *vitez*).<sup>37</sup>

The feudal process of state disintegration in historical and geographical regions and their lords began in ban Stjepan’s time, but came to its climax during the reign of Tvrtko and the civil war with his brother Vuk (Stephen) (1366–1373), and finally, soon after his death. The mightiest of all was Duke Hrvoje Vukčić, who played a significant role in the “game of throne” in Hungary, as well in Bosnia. The title of Duke/Herzog of Split (*dux Spaleti*) was granted to him by King Zsigmund’s opponent from Naples, and this signified Hrvoje’s independent rule in regard to the Bosnian King. One might also connect the origin of the title to Hrvoje’s seat in the town of Split, where the Byzantine *theme* of Dalmatia had its center. Nevertheless, some Byzantine influences could be detected in Hrvoje’s, rather strange, use of the title of “veliki protodjer” (μέγας πρωτόγερος, *megas protogeros*) of the Bosnian



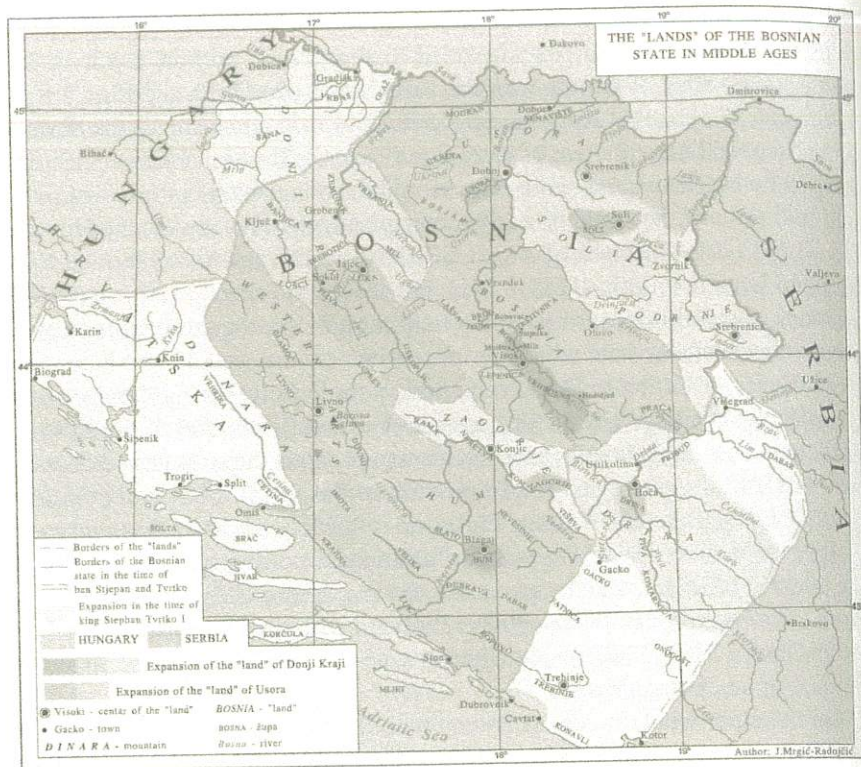


Figure 11.2 Map was originally published in: J. Mrgić-Radojčić, "Rethinking." Source: Created by the author.

Kingdom. The term itself and the context is quite unique, therefore no firm conclusions can be made.<sup>38</sup>

In the autumn of the Balkan Middle Ages, Ottoman expansion and their making of the new world empire did reintroduce Bosnia into Byzantine historiography, but only briefly, to remark its final stage of sovereignty. King Stephen Tomaš (1443–1461) had turned to Rome and Catholicism, partly in the hope of acquiring significant military and financial help from the papacy against the advancement of the victorious Ottoman army. The other plan, to acquire huge land possessions of the Serbian Despot in Hungary by way of his son's marriage, was equally unsuccessful.<sup>39</sup>

In conclusion, it might be observed that the overall influence of the Byzantine Empire on the medieval Bosnian state was only sporadic on the grounds of the totally marginal position of the Central Balkan's region in imperial policy, and on the other hand, Bosnia's own political, social, and cultural development. Nevertheless, its place within the reach of the Empire's wings should be further evaluated.

## NOTES

1. I would like to express a special gratitude to Professor Johannes Koder (Vienna), for his more than useful comments and corrections, long-lasting support and challenges, which all improved the quality of this and other papers we wrote.

2. P. Burke, *History and Social Theory* (Polity Press, 1996). There is a huge amount of historiographical work on Constantinople, and we will refer only to the volume edited by Cyril Mango and Gilbert Dagron, *Constantinople and its Hinterland* (Aldershot, 1995). See also: R. Radić, "Constantinople in Serbian medieval sources," in I. Iliev (ed.), *Proceedings of the 22nd international congress of Byzantine studies: Sofia, 22–27 August 2011. Vol. 1, Plenary papers* (Sofia, 2011), pp. 191–211.

3. See: J. Erdeljan, "Stećci—pogled na ikonografiju narodne pogrebne umetnosti na Balkanu" [Stećci—A View of the Iconography of Popular Funerary Art in the Balkans], *Zbornik Matice Srpske za Likovne Umetnosti* 32–33 (2003), pp. 107–19.

4. R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, ed. Thomas Malcolm Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946), pp. 215ff.

5. L. Guelke, "Historical Geography and Collingwood's Theory of Historical Knowing," in Alan R. H. Baker and M. Billinge (eds.), *Period and Place—Research Methods in Historical Geography* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 189–96; A. R. H. Baker, "Reflection on the relation of historical geography and the Annales school of history," in Alan R. H. Baker and Derek Gregory (eds.), *Exploration in Historical Geography—Interpretative Essays* (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 14ff.

6. D. Chakrabarty, "The Climate of History: Four Theses," *Critical Inquiry* 35 (2009), p. 213ff.

7. J. Mrgić, "Rethinking the Territorial Development of the Medieval Bosnian State," *Istorijski časopis* 51 (2004), pp. 43–64; idem, "Transition from Late Medieval to Early Ottoman Settlement Patterns: A Case Study of Northern Bosnia," *Südost-Forschungen* 65–66 (2006–2007 [2008]), pp. 50–86; idem, *Severna Bosna 13–16. vek* (Belgrade, 2008); idem, "Some Considerations on Woodland Resource in the Medieval Serbia and Bosnia," *Beogradski Istorijski Glasnik/Belgrade Historical Review* 1 (2010), pp. 87–101; idem, "Wine or rakı—The Interplay of Climate and Society in the Early Modern Ottoman Bosnia," *Environment & History* 17, No. 4 (November 2011), pp. 613–37.

8. M. Bloch, *La société féodale, t. I: La formation des liens de dépendance, 1939; t. II: Les classes et le gouvernement des hommes* (Paris, 1940); W. Norton, "Historical geography as the evolution of spatial form," in *Period and Place*, pp. 251–7; J. Michelet: "... l'histoire est une résurrection de la vie intégrale non pas dans ses surfaces, mais dans ses organismes intérieurs et profonds," Preface de *L'Histoire de France*, Tome I (Paris, 1880), p. iii.

9. J. Mrgić, "Srednjovekovni čovek i priroda," in S. Marjanović-Dušanić and D. Popović (eds.), *Istorijski život u srpskim zemljama srednjeg veka* (Belgrade, 2004), pp. 162ff.

10. A comprehensive study on Bosnian-Hungarian interrelations may be found in: D. Lovrenović, *Na klizištu povijesti. Sveta kruna ugarska i Sveta kruna bosanska 1387–1463* (Zagreb–Sarajevo, 2006).



11. Most of the studies deal with the role of Dubrovnik, and to significantly extent, with other communes, and here is only a short list of references: B. Kreković, *Dubrovnik in the 14th and 15th Centuries: A City Between East and West* (Oklahoma, 1972); idem, *Dubrovnik: A Mediterranean Urban Society 1300–1600* (Aldershot, 1997); idem, "On the Latino-Slavic Cultural Symbiosis in Late Medieval and Renaissance Dalmatia and Dubrovnik," *Viator* 26 (1995), pp. 321–32; D. Kovačević-Kojć, *Trgovina u srednjovjekovnoj Bosni* (Sarajevo, 1961); M. Šunjić, *Bosna i Venecija (odnosi u XIV i XV stoljeću)* (Sarajevo, 1996); T. Raukar, *Zadar u XV stoljeću. Ekonomski razvoj i društveni odnosi* (Zagreb, 1977); C. Fisković, "Dalmatinski majstori u srednjovjekovnoj Bosni i Hercegovini," in *Srednjovjekovna Bosna i evropska kultura* (Zenica, 1973), pp. 147–99; S. Ćirković, "Continuité et rupture des hiérarchies, le cas des villes dalmates et de leur arrière-pays," in: *Gerarchie economica e gerarchie sociali, secoli XII–XVIII* (Firenze, 1990), pp. 73–89; idem, "Ragusa e il suo retroscena nel Medio Evo," in A. Vittorio (ed.), *Ragusa e il Mediterraneo. Ruolo e funzioni di una Repubblica marinara tra Medio evo ed Eta moderna* (Bari, 1990), pp. 15–26; E. Pašalić, *Antička naselja i komunikacije u Bosni i Hercegovini* (Sarajevo, 1960); I. Bojanovski, *Dolabelin sistem cesta u rimskoj provinciji Dalmaciji* (Sarajevo, 1974); L. Čoralić, "Izvori i literature o povijesti cesta i puteva u srednjovjekovnim hrvatskim zemljama i Bosni," *Radovi ZHP FF u Zagrebu* 24 (1991), pp. 23–40; on slave trade, see: D. Dinić-Knežević, *Migracije stanovništva iz južnoslovenskih zemalja u Dubrovnik tokom srednjeg veka* (Novi Sad, 1995); N. Fejić, "Imagining the 'Other'—The Bosnian Slave in Mediterranean Space," *The Medieval History Journal* 5 (2002), pp. 291–308.

12. J. Koder, *Der Lebensraum der Byzantiner* (Second edition, Graz–Wien–Köln, 2001), pp. 13–21 and passim. See also: S. Ćirković, "Bosna i Vizantija," in *Osam stotina godina povelje bana Kulina* (Sarajevo, 1989), pp. 23–5; P. Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier: A Political Study of the Northern Balkans, 900–1204* (Cambridge, 2000).

13. Ban Matija appointed as his deputy in Split his relative, a certain Richard from Calabria, a fact that also points to trans-Adriatic connections of Bosnia in this time; Thomas Archidiaconus, *Historia Salonitana*, F. Rački (ed.) (Zagreb, 1894), pp. 185–203; Latin and Engl. edition: Thomae Archidiaconi Spalatensis, *Historia Salonitanorum atque Spalatinorum pontificum*/Archdeacon Thomas of Split, *History of the Bishops of Salona and Split* (Budapest, 2006), pp. 341ff.

14. In his innovative study on Skenderbeg and his rebellion against the Ottoman government, Oliver Jens Schmitt made an interesting comparison of North Albania with Wales; Skanderbeg, *Der Neue Alexander auf dem Balkan* (Regensburg, 2009), pp. 9ff.

15. P. Vidal de la Blanche, *Principes de géographie humaine* (Paris, 1922).

16. M. Dinić, *Državni sabor srednjovjekovne Bosne* (Belgrade, 1955). Bosnian feudal lords with their family members and vassals—termed "bratija" in charters—should be further reevaluated in light of new analysis of social networks. Though data are scarce and incomplete, we have presented the "network" of Duke Hrvoje Vukčić in our study *Donji Kraji*, pp. 97ff. Nowadays, one should definitely not overlook the innovative research of Johannes Preisner-Kapeller, such as presented in his paper

"Networks of Border Zones: Multiplex Relations of Power, Religion and Economy in South-Eastern Europe, 1250–1453 AD," in Mingquan Zhou et al. (eds.), *Revive the Past. Proceedings of the 39th Conference on Computer Applications and Quantitative Methods in Archaeology* (Amsterdam, 2011), pp. 381–93, and Appendix with charts and figures.

17. R. D. Sack, *Human Territoriality. Its Theory and History* (Cambridge, 1986).

18. *De Administrando Imperio*, Greek text ed. by Gy. Moravcsik, Engl. transl. by R. J. H. Jenkins, (Washington D.C., 1967), pp. 151, 160–1; A. Loma, "Serbisches und kroatisches Sprachgut bei Konstantin Porphyrogenetos," *ZRVI* 38 (1999/2000), pp. 87–161; Mrgić, "Rethinking," pp. 47–49; further, see the outstanding analysis of J. Goldstein, "'Zemljica Bosna'—'το χωρίον Βόσωνα' u 'De administrando imperio' Konstantina Porphyrogenita," in *Zbornik o Pavlu Andelihu* (Sarajevo, 2008), pp. 97–109. On the Byzantine settlement typology, see the latest results in: J. Koder, "Überlegungen zur ländlichen Siedlungsterminologie der Byzantiner, insbesondere zu chorion, kome und verwandten Termini," *Bulgaria Mediaevalis* 2 (2011), pp. 3–14. Again, we thank Prof. Koder for sending us his valuable text.

19. For Herzegovina, see: M. Dinić, "Zemlje hercega od Sv. Save," in idem, *Srpske zemlje u srednjem veku* (Belgrade, 1978), pp. 178–269; S. Mišić, *Humuska zemlja u srednjem veku* (Beograd, 1996); idem, "Zemlja u državi Nemanjića," *Godišnjak za društvenu istoriju* IV (1999), pp. 133–46; idem, "Kosače—gospoda humuska," in *Srpska proza danas. Kosače—osnivači Hercegovine* (Bileća—Gacko—Belgrade, 2002), pp. 342–50; J. Dedijer, *Hercegovina—antropogeografska studija* (Belgrade, 1909). Cf. modern geographical demarcation in: J. Marković, *Geografske oblasti FNR Jugoslavije* (Belgrade, 1970).

20. R. Petrović, "O problemu geografske rajonizacije Jugoslavije," *Geografski pregled* 1 (Sarajevo, 1957), pp. 104–33; I. Rubić, "Međe Mediterana na istočnoj obali Jadrana," *Geografski pregled* 1, pp. 136–48; V. Rogić, "Geografski koncept regije," *Geografski glasnik* 25 (Zagreb, 1963), pp. 113–22; K. Papić, "Ekonomskogeografske regije Bosne i Hercegovine—problemi, iskustva i prijedlog regionalizacije," *Geografski pregled* 21 (Sarajevo, 1977), pp. 23–55.

21. M. S. Filipović, "Visočka nahija," *SEZ—Naselja i poreklo stanovništva* 25 (1928), pp. 193, 196; N. Pavković, "Društveni život stočara na letnjim stanovima u Bosni," *Glasnik Zemaljskog Muzeja—Etnologija* 35–36 (1981), p. 101; J. Mrgić, *Donji Kraji*, pp. 31–2.

22. John Kinnamos, *Deeds of John and Manuel Comnenus*, Engl. transl. by Ch. M. Brand (New York, 1976), pp. 84, 103–4; *Letopis popa Dukljanina*, F. Šišić (ed.), (Zagreb, 1928), pp. 103–4, 139; Mrgić, *Donji Kraji*, p. 32; idem, *Severna Bosna*, p. 52. This is only to stress the fact that the personal name "Stephen" was present in the line of the Bosnian rulers much prior to Tvrtko's coronation.

23. J. Ferluga, *Vizantijska uprava u Dalmaciji* (Beograd, 1957), pp. 132–33; S. Ćirković, *Istorija srednjovjekovne bosanske države* (Beograd, 1964), p. 46; idem, "Bosna i Vizantija," pp. 23–35; J. Maksimović, "Umetnost u doba srednjovjekovne bosanske države," *Zbornik za istoriju BiH* 2 (1997), p. 43; idem, "Prvi klesari širskih natpisa na Balkanu," *Glasnik Zemaljskog Muzeja—Arheologija* 16 (1961), pp. 309–16; I. Nikolajević, "Crkva u Bilimišću kod Zenice," in *Srednjovjekovna*



*Bosna i evropska kultura* (Zenica, 1973), pp. 235–43; V. Stanković, *Manojlo Komnin, vizantijski car (1143–1180)* (Belgrade, 2008); A. Krstić, “Kučevo i Železnik u svetlu osmanskih deftera,” *Istorijski Časopis* 49 (2002), pp. 139–62.

24. M. Blagojević, “Srpske udeone kneževine,” *ZRVI* 36 (1997), pp. 45–62; idem, “Veliki knez i zemaljski knez,” *ZRVI* 41 (2004) pp. 293–318; Mrgić, *Donji Kraji*, pp. 35ff; eadem, “Rethinking,” pp. 54ff; S. Mišić, “Territorial division and representatives of local administration in the medieval Bosnian state,” *Beogradski Istorijski Glasnik/Belgrade Historical Review* 1 (2010), pp. 69–86; D. Kovačević-Kojić, *Trgovina u srednjovekovnoj bosanskoj državi* (Sarajevo, 1961); eadem, “Privredni razvoj srednjovekovne bosanske države,” *Prilozi za istoriju BiH* 1 (Sarajevo, 1987), pp. 89–190.

25. See for example: P. Horden and N. Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (Oxford–Malden, 2000); E. Kislinger, J. Koder, and A. Külzer (eds.), *Handelsgüter und Verkehrswege. Aspekte der Warenversorgung im östlichen Mittelmeerraum (4. bis 15. Jahrhundert)*, Akten des Internationalen Symposiums Wien, 19–22. Oktober 2005 (Vienna, 2010); C. Morrisson (ed.), *Trade and Markets in Byzantium* (Washington, D.C., 2012). We express our gratitude to Prof. Johannes Koder, for kindly informing us on this publication and for sending his text—“Regional Networks in Asia Minor during the Middle Byzantine Period—An Approach” from this volume, pp. 147–76. In the same volume, A. Laiou treated the Balkans’ regional networks and connections with Constantinople and Thessaloniki (pp. 125–46), while R. W. Dorin dedicated his paper to Adriatic trade networks (pp. 235–80).

26. For an overview of literature concerning župa, see: Mrgić, “Rethinking,” pp. 47–8, n.10; discerning Catholic parishes from territorial units, see M. Blagojević, “Severna granica bosanske države u XIV veku,” in *Bosna i Hercegovina od srednjeg veka do najnovijeg vremena* (Belgrade, 1995), pp. 59–76.

27. See, for example: P. Soustal, “Überlegungen zur Rolle der Toponyme als Quelle für die historische Geographie,” in K. Belke, F. Hild, J. Koder, and P. Soustal (eds.), *Byzanz als Raum. Zu Methoden und Inhalten der historischen Geographie des östlichen Mittelmeerraumes* (Vienna, 2000), pp. 209–22; idem, “Place Names as Sources for Migration and Settlement: Continuity and Change in Byzantine Chalkidiki,” *Wiener Schriften zur Geographie und Kartographie* 18 (2009), pp. 177–83.

28. A. Loma, Sutelica, *Istorijski Glasnik* (1987), pp. 9ff; *Archaeological Lexicon of Bosnia and Herzegovina* (Sarajevo, 1988), pp. 15, 48.

29. Idem, “Sprachgut,” pp. 108–9. Daštansko was recorded as the silver mine in the earliest Ottoman source from 1468; A. Handžić, “Rudnici u Bosni od druge polovine XV vijeka do početka XVII,” *Prilozi za istoriju BiH* 2 (Sarajevo, 1987), pp. 7–37.

30. M. S. Filipović, *Varošica Olovo s okolinom* (Belgrade, 1934).

31. See the latest results concerning Roman mining and skilled labor force colonization in the region of Olovo, in: A. Loma and S. Loma, “Dva srednjobosanska toponima—Solun, Labun i topografski dinamizam rimske Dalmacije,” *Onomatološki prilozi* 21 (2011), pp. 1–14.

32. On the issue of Saxon immigration, see: J. Mrgić, “Some Considerations on Woodland Resource in the Medieval Serbia and Bosnia,” *Beogradski Istorijski Glasnik/Belgrade Historical Review* 1 (2010), pp. 87–101. Traces of migration of

skilled labor force, Saxon miners and their slavized descendants, with knowledge and technology transfer, M. S. Filipović detected in the region of Borovica, in the same mining rever as Daštansko and Olovo. It was recorded as a silver mine in the earliest Ottoman sources (1468), but this ethnographer observed how in 1928 the inhabitants of Borovica were regarded as special by their neighbors, since they had lived so secluded and kept to themselves. He suggested that perhaps they were descendants of old inhabitants, even Saxons judging from the preserved mining terminology (orti, kram), or that they had originally come from Duboštica, another medieval mining center in this area—“Borovica,” *SEZ—Naselja i poreklo stanovništva* 26 (1930), pp. 591–613; on Duboštica—K. Jireček, “Trgovački putevi i rudnici Srbije i Bosne u srednjem vijeku,” *Zbornik Konstantina Jirečeka* I (Belgrade, 1959), p. 263, n. 160; D. Kojić-Kovačević, *Gradska naselja srednjovjekovne bosanske države* (Sarajevo, 1978), p. 81; on Ottoman records: A. Handžić, “Rudnici u Bosni od druge polovine XV vijeka do početka XVII,” pp. 7ff.

33. S. Trifković, “Sarajevsko polje,” *SEZ—Naselja i poreklo stanovništva* (Beograd, 1908); V. Skarić, *Sarajevo i njegova okolina od najstarijih vremena do austro-ugarske okupacije* (Sarajevo, 1937, 1987); D. Kovačević-Kojić, “O srednjovekovnom trgu na mjestu današnjeg Sarajeva,” *Zbornik FF u Beogradu* 11-1 (1970), pp. 353–62; P. Anđelić, “Srednji vijek,” *Visoko i okolina kroz historiju* I (Visoko, 1984), pp. 183–310; B. Zlatar, *Zlatno doba Sarajeva (XVI stoljeće)* (Sarajevo, 1996).

34. Lj. Stojanović, *Stare srpske povelje i pisma I-I* (Belgrade, 1929), p. 6; Lj. Stefovski-Vasiljev, “Novi podatak o Vatikanskom srpskom jevandjelistu XIII veka,” *Zbornik Vladimira Mošina* (Beograd, 1977), pp. 141–2; J. Maksimović, “Umetnost u doba bosanske srednjovekovne države,” pp. 54–5.

35. P. Anđelić, *Bobovac i Kraljevska Sutjeska* (Sarajevo, 1973); P. Živković, *Tvrtko II Tvrtković: Bosna u prvoj polovini XV stoljeća* (Sarajevo, 1981); D. Lovrenović, *Na klizištu povijesti*; K. Jireček, *Trgovački putevi*; G. Škrivanić, *Putevi u srednjovekovnoj Srbiji*; Mrgić, *Donji Kraji*, pp. 281ff (Kuripešić’s and other itineraries with the map); eadem, *Severna Bosna*, pp. 350ff, with a map.

36. On the content of the terms “milost” and “gospodin,” see: M. Blagojević, *Državna uprava*, pp. 64–72; Mrgić, *Donji Kraji*, pp. 49ff. Jelisaveta seemed to share some of her father’s strong personality and she would not have given away the reins of Kingdom after becoming a widow in 1382; P. Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen: A History of Medieval Hungary 895–1526* (London–New York, 2001), pp. 195ff.

37. V. Ćorović, *Kralj Tvrtko Kotromanić* (Beograd, 1925); S. Ćirković, *Istorija srednjovekovne bosanske države*; M. Blagojević, *Državna uprava*.

38. Mrgić, *Donji Kraji*, pp. 102ff. One direction of thought would be that it was such an exclusive title, just “tailored” for Hrvoje’s outstanding ambitions.

39. J. Radonić, “Kritovul, vizantijski istorik XV veka,” *Glas SKA* 138 (1930); R. Radić, “Bosna u istorijskom delu Kritovula s Imbrosa,” *ZRVI* 43 (2006), pp. 141–54; D. R. Reinsch, “Kritobulos of Imbros—learned historian, Ottoman raya and Byzantine patriot,” *ZRVI* 40 (2003), pp. 197–211; J. Mrgić, “Poslednja dva Kotromanića i Despotovina,” in M. Spremić (ed.), *Pad srpske Despotovine* (Belgrade, 2011), pp. 195–201.



*Part III*

**AFTERMATH: BETWEEN TWO  
EMPIRES, BETWEEN TWO ERAS**

## Chapter 12

### Before and After the Fall of the Serbian Despotate

#### *The Differences in the Timar Organization in the Serbian Lands in the Mid-Fifteenth Century*

Ema Miljković

The Serbian lands came within the scope of the Ottoman conquering plans as early as the 1370s. Although the Battle of Kosovo in June 1389 represents one of the milestones in Serbian medieval history, it was not, contrary to popular view, the end of the independent Serbian state. The Despotate, a successor of the Serbian Empire and Moravian Serbia, survived for seventy more years, experiencing a cultural and political renaissance in the first half of the fifteenth century before it was conquered by the Ottomans in 1459. However, even before that date, the introduction of Ottoman institutions had begun in those provinces of the former Serbian Empire that had fallen under Ottoman rule.

#### I

The *timar* system represented one of the most important institutions of Ottoman society. Although originally not Ottoman, the *timar* system reached its full shape and originality in the Ottoman state, where three phases of its development can be identified:

1. The establishment of the *timar* system, during the beginning of the Ottoman state;



2. The Classical period of the *timar* organization, which began with the rule of Sultan Mehmed II the Conqueror and lasted to the end of the sixteenth century (some argue that this phase ends with the death of the sultan Süleyman the Magnificent in 1566); and
3. The phase of decline up until the *timar* system was completely abrogated in 1831.<sup>1</sup>

The originality of the *timar* system when compared with its contemporary feudal system in Western Europe was in the land ownership. In the Ottoman Empire, the land ownership system included three categories: the *harach*, the *ushur*, and the *miri* lands.<sup>2</sup> Almost all land in southeastern Europe belonged to this third category and that was the foundation of the *timar* system. According to that concept, all land was owned by the sultan, as personification of the State and the ultimate authority; he had the right to dispose of it as he wished, resulting in the complete annulment of the private ownership of land. However, even within the *miri* lands there existed the categories of *mulk* and *vaqf*, which were contradictory to the above-mentioned principle; annulment of those categories, was, however, the essence of the land reforms undertaken by Mehmed II the Conqueror.<sup>3</sup>

Roughly, the estates in the Ottoman Empire were classified as *timars*, *zeamets*, and *hasses*, depending on their revenue. The highest annual revenue from the *timar* was 19.999 *akches*, and it was given to the *sipahis* who had in return to fulfill their military duties, as well as to maintain the internal security and control of the population living on the *timar*. The revenue from the *zeamet* was ranging from 20.000 to 99.999 *akches* and it was given to functionaries of medium rank, such as *alay beg*, *timar kethude*, *timar defterdari*, *divan notars*, and *çauş*. The revenue from the *hass* was over 100.000 *akches* and beside the sultan himself, it was given to the highest state administrative and military functionaries, such as *vesirs*, *belgerbegs*, *sanjakebs*, *defterdars*, and *nişancis*.<sup>4</sup> Due to this organization, the *sipahi* units represented a well-equipped territorial cavalry, which was paid from the annual revenues of the *timars*, as well as from war loot.<sup>5</sup>

The Ottoman state, even during its early Anatolian stage, had been organized in the so-called *uc*, that is, border regions, with highly concentrated military and administrative authority, reflected through multi-level *timar* tenure, as well as through institutions of the feudal servants or protégées, linked to the commander of the border region. The border region of Isa-beg Ishaković (Zvečan, Jeleč, Ras, Sjenica, Tetovo, and Skopje) provides a typical example of this organization. Where there was a two-tiered structure, Isa-beg stood at the highest tenure level, and on the second level were the members of his family; in the case of a three-tiered structure, Isa-beg was again on the highest level, on the second were his servants of higher rank, such as *subaşı*, and on

the third level were his servants of lower ranks. The largest number of *timars* with two- and three-level systems of tenure was registered in the year 1455 in the *nahiye* of Kalkandelen (Tetovo), while at the *nahiye* of Sjenica, which was part of Isa-beg fiefs as well, no multi-level *timar* tenure was registered.<sup>6</sup> Examples of border regions of this new type is the Sanjak of Smederevo (established in 1459) and the Sanjak of Bosnia (established in 1463), where such relations had not been observed.

The institution of *timar* in the Ottoman Empire did not presume the territorial integrity of the fief, since the *timars* of certain *sipahis* were often composed of villages situated far away from each other with the settlements between them belonging to *timars* of other *sipahis*. The *timar* was composed and determined according to the revenue granted to each *sipahi* for his service.<sup>7</sup> Thus, it can be concluded that the *timar* was a fiscal and not a territorial concession. For example, in the census book for the region of Braničevo dated 1467, a *timar* was registered to a holder named Hamza, son of Doğan, and consisted of the villages of Svinje and Kruševica, located in the district of Ždrelo, and also the village of Sladince in the district of Pek.<sup>8</sup>

The *timar* holders were obliged to live in one of the villages of their *timar*. In the case of war, one tenth of them stayed behind and did all the work for those who participated in the campaign. In addition, they were obliged to provide the warriors with food, as well as to see to the land cultivation. Those *timar* holders who were part of the fortress garrisons, due to their specific service, did not have the obligation to live on their own *timar*; they took care of their land through the popular chieftains, *knezs*, and *primikurs*. Each *sipahi* had, on his *timar*, one piece of land for their own usage (so called *hassa* land), which could be given for cultivation to someone else, with a rent of one quarter of the production, or under *tapi*. The *sipahi* replacing him had the right to reconsider the *tapi*, to give it again under the same conditions, to change the conditions or to revoke it completely.<sup>9</sup>

The earliest preserved census book for any of the Serbian provinces that came under Ottoman rule is the register of Kruševac, Toplica, and Dubočica, concluded during the first reign of Mehmed II (1444–1446). This census book presents the register of one of the temporary Ottoman administrative units, which had existed before the definite fall of Serbia (1459) and Bosnia (1463) to the Ottoman rule. The census book in question is the copy made in the Ottoman capital, not the original material registered in the field, which is clear from the numerous notes written in the margins of the book. These notes are of immense importance, since they make it possible to reconstruct the essence of the *timar* system in the Balkans in its early stage, during the 1440s and 1450s, before the land reform performed by Mehmed II. By analyzing the data given in this census book and by their comparison to data from later epochs, it is possible to trace the main stages of the Ottoman *timar* system and to identify



adjustments and solutions that suited the central government best. Similar to the border region of Isa-beg Ishaković, registered in 1455, the regions of Kruševac, Toplica, and Dubočica were established as border regions of the older type. However, like the region of Sjenica, mentioned above, the *timar* system in those regions was not based on the multi-level *timar* tenure.<sup>10</sup>

## II

The majority of the *timars* registered in the regions of Kruševac, Toplica, and Dubočica during the 1440s were accompanied by the note "given from the *Despot's tahvil*."<sup>11</sup> The note means, as is clearly stated by the editors of this important document, that these regions were given back on the occasion of the return of Mara Branković to Serbia in 1451.<sup>12</sup> Those regions had been reconquered by the Ottomans as early as 1453.<sup>13</sup>

The *timar* was not given permanently, nor could it be automatically inherited. The tenure of the *timar* was conditioned with service, which could be administrative or religious, but was most often military. In cases in which the *timar* holder had not satisfied the demands of his service or did it poorly, he could lose his *timar*, without any other additional punishment. At the same time, a *timar* holder who managed to gain prominence might receive additional revenue (*teraki*). The composition and revenue from the *timar* was linked to its holder and depended on his personal position, authority, and activities. The *timar* would not have been automatically inherited by the person who succeeded the previous *sipahi* in the particular service.<sup>14</sup> However, the abundant remarks noted in the register for the regions of Kruševac, Toplica, and Dubočica from the 1440s offer a slightly different picture. In several cases it is mentioned that the *timar* was inherited by an under-age son. His service was performed by *cebelular* (armored companions), which varies from the principle mentioned above, strictly applied after the year 1451. Possibly, the hereditary principle was changed later in order to achieve the greater efficiency and to avoid possible misuses. Among *timars* awarded to underage heirs is the example of deceased Yusuf, son of Saruça Asoĝlan. A note in the records reads that the *timar* "is now given jointly to the sons of the above-mentioned Yusuf: Uruç, Hacı, and Muhamedi. They hold it jointly and jointly participate in the campaigns alternatively; according to the berat their replacements take part in the campaigns."<sup>15</sup>

Along with the *timar* of a certain Hasan that encompassed five villages and two *mezraas*, with a total income of 6,259 *akches*, it was noted: "Hasan, of his own free will, transferred his *timar* to his son Hacib; he was given the berat by our padishah. It was again confirmed to Hacib, from the *tahvil* of the Despot."<sup>16</sup>

This census book also registered the *timar* hold of a certain Doĝan's daughter, who had died in the meanwhile. Thus, the *timar* had been given to someone else. This is one of the rare examples when a female was given the *timar* concession.<sup>17</sup>

In another example, the census book for the border region of Isa-beg Ishaković notes that the fief hold (part of his *hass* tenure) of his wife, consisted of seven villages (a total of 606 houses) in the *vilayet* of Kalkandelen (Tetovo). Her registered income was relatively high (68,038 *akches*).<sup>18</sup> In the younger census book there is no mention of the female *timar* holders.<sup>19</sup>

In the analyzed census book for the regions of Kruševac, Toplica, and Dubočica from 1444/1445, out of the total number of 74 *timars*, 8 (11 percent) were held by Christian *sipahis*.

If we compare this number with the number of the Christian *sipahis* in the Sanjak of Smederevo some thirty years later, immense differences can be seen. According to the register for the *Sanjak* of Smederevo from 1476, 48 percent of the total number of *timars* in that region was held by Christian *sipahis*. We presume that such an increase in the number of Christian *sipahis* within the Ottoman *timar* system is linked to the establishment of the new type of border region. The *Sanjak* of Smederevo represents a perfect example of the border region of the new type with its main concept the mass inclusion of the local population into the Ottoman military and auxiliary forces.<sup>20</sup>

The census book for the regions of Kruševac, Toplica, and Dubočica registered the transfer of *timar* rights from a Christian *timar* holder to a Muslim one. Thus, the *timar* which consisted of parts of the villages of Zobnice, Dragovci, and Mačišta that had been previously assigned to a certain Vlk and his brother Mrkša, was assigned to Mahmud from Vidin, because the first *timar* holder "had remained in the Despot's land," as was noted by the census clerk.<sup>21</sup> The *timar* of a certain Vlkoslav, who had died in the meantime, was

Table 12.1 The Christian *sipahis* in the regions of Kruševac, Toplica, and Dubočica in 1444/1445

<i>Timar Holder</i>	<i>Villages</i>	<i>Parts of Villages</i>	<i>Mezraas</i>	<i>Houses</i>	<i>Widows</i>	<i>Income</i>
Vlk and Mrkša	1	3	1	34		2257
Ivča, <i>martolos</i>	1			6		450
Stepan, <i>paša's</i> son-in-law	2			34	4	2523
Jovan	3			57	1	6127
Vlkosav	1			17	2	1253
Silojan The Metropolitan	3			52		4245
Stanče	1			12	1	1456
Priježda	1			35	6	3250
Total:	13	3	1	247	14	21561



given to Yusuf, who had converted to Islam.<sup>22</sup> In some cases, however, the *timars* were transferred from Muslim to Christians. There is a note related to the *timar* of *tüfekçi* Karaca, that the village called Bratovica should have been taken from his *timar* and registered to the "pasha's relative called Grgur Konic/or Konjić."<sup>23</sup> Likewise, a certain Ivča the martolos had been given the *timar* previously hold by *asoĝlan* Ali.<sup>24</sup>

The *timar* holder in this region was also registered as the Metropolitan Siloyan, "the pasha's man" or "pasha's relative."<sup>25</sup> This *timar* consisted of three villages with 52 houses and one *mezraa*, which was added later, with a total income of 4.245 *akches*.<sup>26</sup>

The later census book for Serbian lands did not register the Metropolitans or any other church dignitaries as *timar* holders.<sup>27</sup>

As in the other Serbian regions that had become the part of the Ottoman state, there were immense differences between the income of Muslim and Christian *timar* holders. Thus, in the regions of Kruševac, Toplica, and Dubočica the highest recorded income for Muslim *timars* was 16.056 *akches* and was assigned to Sagrak, servant of Ismail, while the lowest income of all *timars* in this region held by Muslims was assigned to Gedik Ali (292 *akches*). As the income was in direct relation to the performed service, it appears that Christian *sipahis* could not obtain the highest positions within the Ottoman military hierarchy.

The notes on the margins of the census book also shed light on the reasons for taking away *timar* concessions. For example, beside the register of the

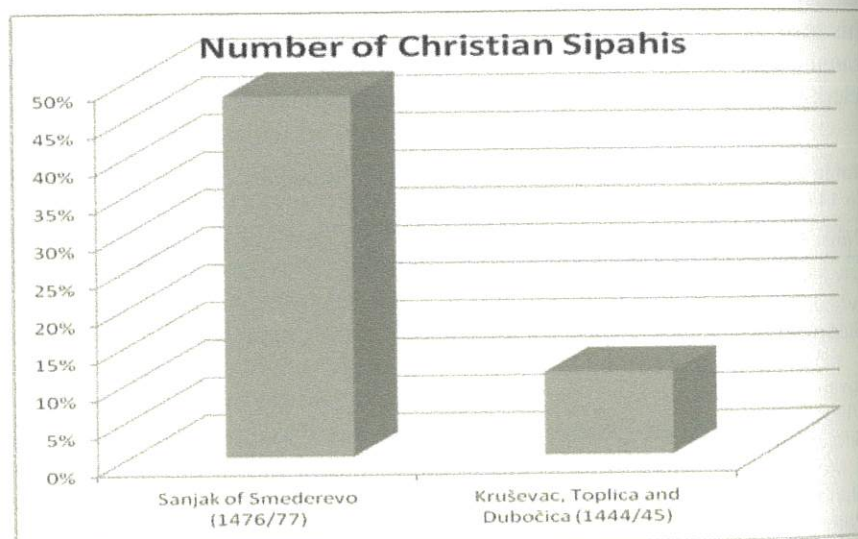


Figure 12.1

### Confessional structure of the sipahis (Kruševac, Toplica and Dubočica)

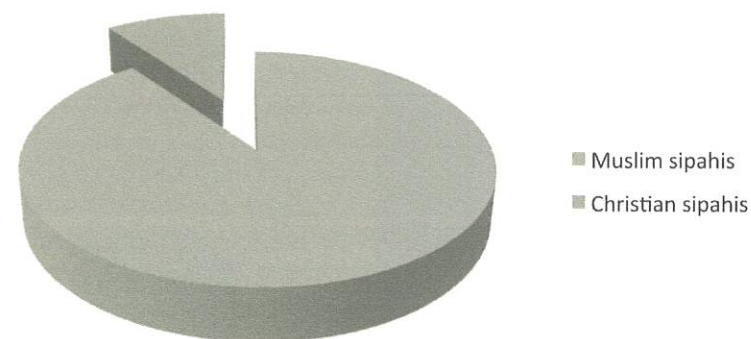


Figure 12.2

*timar* of Musa, son of the *kapıcı* Ismail, the following comment was noted: "The sanjak-beg wrote a letter stating that he [Musa, E. M.] had not registered the haraj of the reaya from the village of Stubica; haraj had not been taken; thus the *timar* had been taken away and assigned to Arnaut Ayas."

The *timar* had been taken away from Mahmud from Vidin, because he had "sold a prisoner," while a certain Kuçuk Zaganos had been left without an income after the *sanjak-beg* reported that he had performed "immoral activities with his wife." A certain Umur lost his *timar* because the "infidels had complained." For the similar reasons, his *timar* was taken away from Orhan, son of Yusuf about whom his *reaya* had complained. It was also reported that he was a "drunkard" and "perpetually stealing from the qadi's man." The *timar* could also be taken away because of the illness of a tenant. The *sanjak-beg* Yakub had reported about a certain Hamza that his "legs and arms are sick (he has rheumatic disorder) and he is not ready to work," thus his *timar* was given to someone else.<sup>28</sup> There were also certain attempts to misuse the documents concerning the *timars* tenure. For example, in a note written by the register of the *timar* of Ali, son of Saruca and Iskender, son of Doğan, consisting of the villages Srednja Kruševica, Zladovac, and Bolja, the clerk had remarked: "The sanjak-beg reported that this Ali was not the son of Saruca and that he had not registered the haraj of the living infidels; thus the village Zladovac was taken from him and given to his cousin, Fani Asil-beg. In his place, according to the berat, his uncle Hizir should send to the campaign one eşkinci. The rest of the villages—there are two of them—should be confirmed to the above-mentioned Iskender."<sup>29</sup>



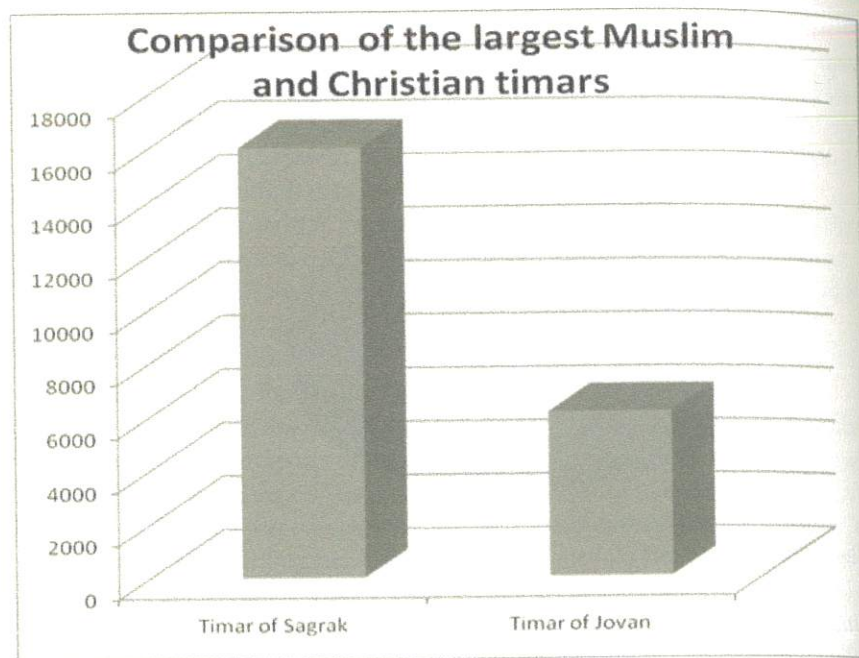


Figure 12.3

The notes also allow us to follow the intentions of the central government that wished to preserve the prescribed income of the *timar* holders. In cases in which certain changes had occurred on the field (i.e., that the *reaya* had fled, etc.), a possible loss was compensated for through the assignment of the income from some other settlement or part of the settlement. For example, along with the *timar* first assigned to Labli Şahin, who had died, it was remarked that it was given to Mahmud from Vidin and his son Isa. That *timar* consisted of two villages, Mirnica and Ćukovac. In the meantime, the village Mirnica had been given to other *timar* holders, thus the above-mentioned Mahmud was given the village Ribar, in the region of Kruševac, and Gornje Dubovo in the region of Dubočica.<sup>30</sup> A similar example is seen in the case of Muraydi Balaban, who had been given a *timar* consisting of the village of Badnjevac and *mezraa* Dolovci. Since *his timar fell apart, with the knowledge of sanjak-beg Sinan-beg*, the village of Gornja Izkolina was given to him in compensation.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, Musa, son of *kapıcı* Ismail, had been compensated for the income coming from the village of Hlebina, which had previously been a part of his *timar*. He was given instead the income of the village of Stubica in the region of Petrus as well as the *mezraa* Kratica. The reasons why the income of the village Hlebina was no longer a part of his *timar* were not mentioned.<sup>32</sup>

It is possible throughout the census book to follow the first notation of the conversion of the Serbian population to Islam. Muslim first names with a Serbian patronymic are mentioned several times: Suleiman, son of Bogdan, the blacksmith; Ağa, son of Aleksa; Yusuf *gûlam* of Isa-beg, son of Todor Muzak.<sup>33</sup> However, since this census book is a general one (*icmâl*), not a detailed one (*mufassal*), there is no precise information regarding the number of the *reaya* population that converted to the Islam, but bearing in mind the data from the *defters* from the later epochs,<sup>34</sup> when that number was still very low, and when the process of conversion was limited to the larger urban surroundings, it is reasonable to assume that the process of conversion to Islam in the regions of Kruševac, Toplica, and Dubočica in the mid-fifteenth century only involved a small portion of the Serbian noble families, who wished to preserve certain privileges within the Ottoman *timar* system.<sup>35</sup>

It can be concluded that the *timar* system in the southern parts of the former Serbian Empire began to take hold during the 1440s and 1450s. The system reached its complex form after the final conquest of Serbia and Bosnia, when Mehmed II the Conqueror, in order to improve his administration of the newly conquered lands, undertook comprehensive land reforms in his Empire, especially in its European provinces. The effects of those reforms are evident when the data from the Ottoman census book dating from the 1440s and 1450s is compared to the *defters* dating from the 1470s. However, because this chapter presents just a case study, a detailed analysis of all the preserved census books for the Balkan provinces of the Ottoman Empire would be needed to provide more thorough conclusions.

## GLOSSARY

*Timar system*—grant of lands or revenues by the sultan to an individual in compensation for his services, essentially similar to the *iqṭāʿ* of the Islamic empire of the Caliphate.

*Timar*—land revenue that brings to its holder income up to 19.999 akches (Ottoman silver coins).

*Zeamet*—land revenue that brings to its holder income up to 99.999 akches.

*Hass*—land revenue that brings to its holder income higher than 100.000 akches.

*Mirri land*—the land that nominally belonged to the state (i.e., to the sultan). The holder had to have sultan's valid permission to hold it.

*Ushri land*—the land that has been conquered by the Muslims and then given to their warriors or other Muslims. As the revenue from this land, only the *ushur* (one tenth of the production) has been given to the poor ones; it was not given as the salary or revenue.



*Harach land*—the land in private ownership, with no state right to its exploitations. The owner of the *harach land* had been given a tax called *harach*, which is different from the *harach* that non-Muslim *reaya* population paid to the sultan.

*Mulk*—land in full private ownership.

*Vaquf*—endowment.

*Sipahi*—feudal cavalryman of the Ottoman Empire whose status resembled that of the medieval European knight. The *sipahi* (from Persian for “cavalryman”) was holder of a fief *timar*, granted directly by the Ottoman sultan and was entitled to all the income from it in return for military service.

## NOTES

1. J. Matuz, “The nature and stages of Ottoman feudalism,” *Asian and African Studies* 16 (1982), pp. 281–92.
2. The glossary of the less-known terms linked to the Ottoman state system is at the end of this chapter.
3. N. Beldiceanu, “Recherches sur la reforme fonciere de Mehmed II,” *Acta Historica* 4 (1965), pp. 27–39.
4. H. Hadžibegić, “Rasprava Ali Čauša iz Sofije o timarskoj organizaciji u XVII stoljeću,” *Glasnik Zemaljskog muzeja u Sarajevu* 2 (1947), pp. 139–206.
5. For more details, see: N. Filipović, “Pogled na osmanski feudalizam (sa posebnim osvrtom na agrarne odnose),” *Godišnjak društva istoričara BIH* 4 (1952), pp. 5–146.
6. H. Šabanović, *Krajište Isa-bega Ishakovića. Zbirni katastarski popis iz 1455. godine* (Sarajevo, 1964), pp. 3–116.
7. *Istanbul, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, Osmanlı Arşivi* (= BBA). *Tapu tahrir defteri* (= TTD), p. 16 (1476); R. Mantran (ed.), *Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman* (Paris, 1989), Serbian translation *Istorija Osmanskog carstva* (Belgrade, 2002), pp. 235–43.
8. M. Stojaković, *Braničevski tefter* (Belgrade, 1987), pp. 112–4.
9. D. Bojanić, “Jadar u XVI i XVII veku,” *Jadar u prošlosti* (Loznica, 1985), p. 112; Hadžibegić, “Rasprava Ali Čauša.”
10. For more details on the border region of Isa-beg Ishaković, see: E. Miljković, “Timarski sistem u nahiji Sjenica,” *Mileševski zapisi* 8 (Prijeplje, 2009), pp. 97–108.
11. *Tahvil* (Ott. Turkish)—transition of ownership; transitory letter. For more details, see: N. Filipović, “O izrazu tahvil,” *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju* 2 (1951), pp. 239–47.
12. For more details, see: O. Zirojević and I. Eren, “Popis oblasti Kruševca, Toplice i Dubočice u vreme prve vladavine Mehmeda II, (1444–1446),” *Vranjski glasnik* 4 (1968), pp. 377–403.
13. Zirojević and Eren, “Popis,” pp. 377–8. For more details on the southeastern border of the Serbian state during the 1450s, see: S. Mišić, “Obnova Despotovine i

njene granice (1444–1459),” *Pad Srpske despotovine* (Belgrade, 2011), pp. 63–74. For more details on Mara Branković, see: M. Popović, *Mara Branković, Eine Frau zwischen dem Christlichen und dem Islamischen Kulturkreis im 15. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden, 2010).

14. Mantran (ed.), *Istorija*, p. 236.
15. Zirojević and Eren, “Popis,” p. 393. A similar note was included with the *timar* of a certain Sari Dogan, *tüfekçi* Ismail, Gedik Ali and Ahmed son of Katib, see there pp. 386, 400, 403, 404.
16. Zirojević and Eren, “Popis,” p. 383.
17. Zirojević and Eren, “Popis,” p. 387. That this case was not isolated has been established by a note registered along with the *timar* of *çakırcı* Doğan. That particular note stated that his *timar* had been given to Mustafa and Hamza, sons of the above mentioned Doğan, “from the Despot’s *tahvil*, as it was assigned to their mothers” (p. 386).
18. Šabanović, *Krajište Isa-bega Ishakovića*, pp. 67–9.
19. See: M. Vasić, O. Zirojević, and A. Stojanovski, “Popis niškog kadiluka iz 1498. godine,” *Spomenik SANU* 131 (Belgrade, 1992); *Defteri i regyistrimit te sanhakut te Shkodres i Vitit 148 5 I-II*, ed. S. Pulaha (Tirana, 1974); *Oblast Brankovića. Opširni katastarski popis iz 1455. godine*, eds. H. Hadžibegić, A. Handžić, and E. Kovačević (Sarajevo, 1972); *Poimenični popis sandžaka vilajeta Hercegovina*, ed. A. Aličić (Sarajevo, 1985); M. Stojaković, *Braničevski tefter* (Belgrade, 1987); *Turski katastarski popisi nekih područja zapadne Srbije I–III*, ed. A. Aličić (Čačak, 1985); A. Handžić, “Dva prva popisa Zvorničkog sandžaka (iz 1519. i 1533. godine),” *Akademija Naukai Umjetnosti Bosnei Hercegovine, Gradja XXVI-22* (Sarajevo, 1986), pp. 199–205; H. Šabanović, *Turski izvori za istoriju Beograda I-I. Turski katastarski popisi Beograda i okoline 1475–1566* (Belgrade, 1964).
20. For more details on the border regions of the new type, see: E. Miljković, “Osmanska populaciona politika na krajištu: Braničevo u drugoj polovini 15. veka,” *Braničevo u istoriji Srbije* (Požarevac, 2008), pp. 209–18.
21. Zirojević and Eren, “Popis,” p. 382.
22. Zirojević and Eren, “Popis,” p. 400.
23. Zirojević and Eren, “Popis,” p. 383.
24. Zirojević and Eren, “Popis,” p. 389.
25. Ott. Turkish: *hiş-i paşa*. Zirojević and Eren, “Popis,” pp. 383, 396.
26. Zirojević and Eren, “Popis,” p. 401.
27. However, in the Sanjak of Smederevo during the second half of the fifteenth century, some *timars* had been held by priests. Also, some *timars* were assigned to monks. For example, in the region of Braničevo, during the 1460s and 1470s, the monks of the Ravanca monastery held the *timar*, along with monks named Nikon and Uglješa; E. Miljković and A. Krstić, *Braničevo u 15. veku. Istorijsko-geografska studija* (Požarevac, 2007), pp. 220–6; A. Krstić, “Parohijsko sveštenstvo u Braničevu u drugoj polovini 15. veka,” *Crkvene studije* 5 (2008), p. 339.
28. Zirojević and Eren, “Popis,” pp. 387, 390, 394, 399.
29. Zirojević and Eren, “Popis,” p. 404.
30. Zirojević and Eren, “Popis,” p. 384.

31. Zirojević and Eren, "Popis," p. 385.
32. Zirojević and Eren, "Popis," p. 387.
33. Zirojević and Eren, "Popis," pp. 388–9, 392, 400.
34. For more details, see: Vasić, Zirojević, and Stojanovski, "Popis niškog kadiluka iz 1498. godine"; M. Vasić, "Stanovništvo kruševačkog sandžaka i njegova društvena struktura u XVI vijeku," *Kruševac kroz vekove* (Kruševac, 1972), pp. 49–73.
35. M. Vasić, *Islamizacija na balkanskom poluostrvu* (Istočno Sarajevo, 2005); B. Đurđev, "Hrišćani-spahije u severnoj Srbiji u XV veku," *Godišnjak Društva istoričara Bosne i Hercegovine* 4 (Sarajevo, 1952), pp. 165–9; E. Miljković, "Hrišćani spahije u Smederevskom sandžaku u drugoj polovini 15. veka," in S. Mišić (ed.), *Moravska Srbija* (Kruševac, 2007), pp. 85–90.

## Chapter 13

# Memories of Home in the Accounts of the Balkan Refugees from the Ottomans to the Apennine Peninsula (Fifteenth to Sixteenth Centuries)

Nada Zečević

Memories of home are notions deeply involved in the process of creating memory about human displacement.<sup>1</sup> On an individual level, these recollections can contain various emotional perspectives of the lost home or trauma associated with one's exile, or can even serve as imaginary homeland. On a collective level, they usually function as a *memoria*—a conscious elicitation of the past spread by one émigré group in order to keep its socio-cultural cohesion.<sup>2</sup> Interestingly, the notions of home recorded by émigrés<sup>3</sup> from the "Byzantine East"<sup>4</sup> during their settlement in the Apennines during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries frequently denoted discontent with the new status, designating it as an involuntary "exile," "this evil," "misery," and "calamitas" of the "destitute" (cf. Proverbs 31:8–9).<sup>5</sup> In most apparent instances, for their fate the émigrés blamed the Ottomans, reserving highest gratulatory expressions (*bona memoria et fama, memoria aeterna, in perpetuam memoriam, terra gloriosa*) for their Italian hosts.<sup>6</sup> Yet, the fact that this gratulatory discourse was done in Latin language, which at the time, was the "official power" language of the émigrés' new environments, suggests that these praises had one specific purpose—to gain an additional esteem or concrete help from their hosts. This assumption seems further supported by a number of "unofficial" situations in which the émigrés expressed more critical opinions about their hosts, usually describing them with common terms as mean, hypocritical, ungrateful for their services, or lacking in genuine culture.<sup>7</sup> In order to further examine the connection between these memories of home and their presentations, in this chapter I shall focus on the most important features of the émigré recollections' content and the most significant circumstances of their public use.<sup>8</sup>



As it is widely known, the Ottoman expansion in the Balkans, with the conquest of Constantinople in 1453 as its culminating moment, triggered several major waves of migrations to the European West.<sup>9</sup> While few émigrés ended up in distant parts of the continent, the majority of them sought shelter in their immediate neighborhoods, in the Apennine peninsula or adjacent territories subject to the Venetian dominion in the Eastern Adriatic and Greece.<sup>10</sup> The chronology, dynamics, and directions of this migration depended on various factors, among which certainly the most important were the intensity and severity of the Ottoman offensives in the Balkans, the émigrés' previous links with the political powers in the Apennines, and particular political situations within each hosting entity.<sup>11</sup> Today, scholars agree that the Venetian Republic and Aragon Naples, being the closest to the territories invaded by the Ottomans, accepted the greatest number of the refugees. To most of these people, migration eventually turned into permanent relocation,<sup>12</sup> thus equaling the repatriating Italian nobility that had inhabited Latin Greece, with the variety of Greek, Slavic, and Albanian territorial lords and their indigenous subjects.<sup>13</sup> Yet, while the émigrés of the highest rank like Thomas Palaiologos and his family or other regional rulers (Bosnian Queen-mother Catherine, Serbian Stephen Branković, or Giovanni Asan Zaccaria of Arcadia), spent the rest of their lives in Rome under safe provisions of the pontifical Curia,<sup>14</sup> Greek intellectuals dispersed across the Apennines and further throughout the continent in search for positions that allowed financial sustenance, just as the majority of Slavic or Albanian commoners and peasants was settled in the bordering zones of the peninsula and its adjacent regions, where Ottoman attacks were seen as imminent.<sup>15</sup>

By the time the major groups of the Easterners settled in the Apennines, an ideological interpretation of their status had already existed there. Its formulation is usually connected with Manuel Chrysoloras (born ca. 1355–1415), Greek scholar and intellectual who "ignited" the Italian Humanists with the fear from the Ottomans.<sup>16</sup> The Humanists further ornamented his discourse with various Aristotelian mnemonic devices and Classical Latin metaphors,<sup>17</sup> modeling it for specific political purposes—some of them, to solicit the interest of the European rulers for new Crusades the papacy pondered since the early 1460s.<sup>18</sup> Among its most notable such options was the one proposed by Cardinal Bessarion (ca. 1403–1472), Greek prelate who accepted the supremacy of the Roman Catholic pontiff, and whose idea of Greece (Hellada) focused on appeals for its liberation from the Ottomans. Bessarion's Greece was highlighted as the cradle of the Antiquity, happy and blessed, at the same time, for being among the central places of the original apostolic Christianity. Subsequently, it was stressed as the core of the entire human civilization, hence the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople was to be seen as the world's apocalypse and the act of major destruction by the

"abominable and monstrous Turks." Bessarion's Greece was Orthodox, but he also saw it as an indivisible part of Christian Europe united under the Pope in Rome, so any attack on it automatically required sharp military response of the pontifical Curia.<sup>19</sup>

The memories of home recorded by the first émigrés to the Apennines did not, however, fully fit into the frames of this discourse. Their primary focus was not on Bessarion's political centrality of Greece or its focal civilization role, but, rather, on various specific territories of the émigrés' real origin. Here, the noble émigrés overstressed their previous landed estates and enumerated in detail even those territories their ancestry had just claimed.<sup>20</sup> Importantly, these references to the landed possessions "left" or "lost" back home were usually accompanied by overstressed staged personal narratives that universally follow any involuntary migration prior to a final settlement in a new environment: The futility of the émigrés' efforts in defending their lands ("pre-fugitive stage"), laments about the tragic nature of their loss, hopes and prayers for a soon restoration ("separation stage"), or dramatic circumstances of their plights ("passage stage").<sup>21</sup> At this point, the émigrés represented their host environments as "alien" ("reception stage"), still identifying themselves through the spatial boundaries of their ancestral territories ("cultural conflict stage").<sup>22</sup>

Following the Ottoman invasion of Otranto in 1480–1481, it became obvious that returning home would be a process far more complex and durable than any émigré could have originally assumed. At this point, the "detailed" and "realistic" tones in their enumerations of the possessions "back home" were replaced by laments about apocalyptically ruined and enslaved home country that was lost forever (*patria perduta*), and highlighted feelings of sadness and pain.<sup>23</sup> Soon, however, this motive of *patria perduta* was reshaped by the second émigré generation (i.e., the first one born on the Italian soil), whose identity was already established through their new homes (defined by Petrarch as "Italy") and centered in "illustrious," "nurturing," and "ever-lasting" Rome.<sup>24</sup> Consequently, the places of their ancestral origin overseas turned into vague denotations of a space they deemed worth mentioning just to hint their "name and race" or, simply, their Humanistic knowledge of the Roman and Greek Antiquity.<sup>25</sup>

To the references about their past possessions, the noble émigrés from the East usually added privileged titles, posts, dignities, and assignments that alleged their high positions in the Byzantine imperial hierarchy.<sup>26</sup> In usual instances of their self-identifications, these émigrés mentioned such details correctly and according to their original forms and meanings. However, in situations when they publicly presented themselves to the host governing representatives,<sup>27</sup> their previous titles and positions were usually translated and interpreted according to the Italian understanding of the Byzantine



administration,<sup>28</sup> or as reflecting the émigrés' concrete aspirations in it.<sup>29</sup> Thus, when the émigrés opted for respectable army positions or diplomatic and courtly careers in the administrations of their new suzerains, their titles significantly stressed the tradition or duration of the émigrés' service to the Byzantine rulers,<sup>30</sup> while the links with the Byzantine imperial military hierarchy were especially alleged by commoners and *stratiots* (mercenary soldiers from the Balkans), who offered to serve in arms their new suzerains.<sup>31</sup> Around the mid-sixteenth century, some *stratiots* were admitted to the Italian nobility—claiming the long tradition of serving in arms the Byzantine imperial power obviously proved an effective way of enhancing their social standing.<sup>32</sup>

Heraldic shields of some military—stratiotic—families, such as those of the Constantino (Constantini), Vassallo or Valentino of Sicily and Reggio Calabria, show that sometimes the claimed links did not even have to necessarily call upon the authentic Byzantine imperial tradition, but could also exploit the most basic associations with the Roman Empire in the East. Some of these families thus simply referred to a motto always connected with Emperor Constantine ("In hoc signo vinces") or just vaguely hinted at their previous orientations towards Byzantium (e.g., heraldic representations of lions turned in the direction of a star positioned in the East and representing Constantinople).<sup>33</sup>

Alleged positions in the Byzantine imperial or military apparatus were often reinforced by suggestive genealogical constructions.<sup>34</sup> Importantly, these constructions did not commemorate all émigrés' ancestors that had formatted their lineage "back home," but just those kinsmen who had significantly contributed to their family's alleged elevated status in the imperial system.<sup>35</sup> Just like other intentional devices of selective presentation, these lineages represented agnatic lines of ancestors, structured by the principle of primogeniture of male and legitimate offspring, whose personal ruling or military skills were highlighted in a superlative grade.<sup>36</sup> Usually, these lineages descended from Byzantine imperial dynasties or were linked with Constantinople as the key center of the imperial power.<sup>37</sup> Among the imperial dynasties the one most commonly chosen as a starting point for these lineage constructions was the Komnenoi, with whom the émigrés preferred to link themselves regardless of whether their true connection in blood had ever existed.<sup>38</sup> The noble émigrés' offspring born in Italy further modified this conception with the elements of the Humanist discourse, so the origins of their lineages typically went back to Homer's heroes, generals of the Augustinian Rome, leaders of the Great Migration (here, Langobards were quite popular as their power in southern Italy was seen as a "continuity" with the ancient Roman tradition), or most powerful early-Byzantine imperial figures (notably Emperors Constantine, Theodosius I, and Justinian) whose significance

in the consolidation of the Roman power was largely known.<sup>39</sup> Based on such allegations, by the sixteenth century the majority of the noble émigrés' offspring represented themselves as direct descendants of the "Emperors of Constantinople" ("*stripe imperiale di Constantinopoli*" or "*stripe regia*").<sup>40</sup>

In the Middle Ages, religion was one of the most important elements of any individual's identity. Thus it is of no wonder why the self-identifications of the Eastern new-comers to Italy frequently exploited the references to the rites of their ancestors. Some émigrés, most notably those from the coastal areas of Dalmatia and Eastern Adriatic, had already been Roman Catholic before they came to the Apennines, but the majority of migrants who came from Greece were of Orthodox Christian denomination. Initially, their settlement was followed by grants that allowed them to confess their ancestral faith with no major restrictions,<sup>41</sup> but this liberty was gradually limited, and almost totally banned after the Council of Trent (1545–1563) allowed radical suppressions of the Orthodox cult, its modifications (measures favoring the Roman Catholic idea of the Union), or ultimate conversions of worshipers to Catholicism.<sup>42</sup> In such situations, some émigrés attempted to preserve their ancestral religion by maintaining crypto-Orthodox liturgical practices, or by transferring the elements of their past tradition to their new denominations (most notable in family cults, patronage, baptism and burial practices).<sup>43</sup> Public declarations of their Orthodoxy gradually disappeared, but in some self-identifications remained behind the 'negotiated' émigrés' stress of their ancestors' participation in the defense of the entire Christianity.<sup>44</sup> Alternatively, when presenting themselves to the host public, the émigrés frequently quoted common invocations of Trinity, a variety of common Biblical places that confirmed the authentic apostolic Christianity of their places of origin, or the Biblical validation of their refugee positions. Among the most common themes employed in such presentations were those of the Old Testament that recalled the suffering and misery of exile: reminding the hosts of the biblical "sojourn" (cf. Deuteron. 6:10–12), that all things come from God and all people were transient on earth (cf. I Chronicle 29:14–15), or imploring God's grace for those who accommodate refugees' (cf. Hebrews 13:1–2). Leaving home to the Ottomans equaled also Abraham's departure (cf. Genesis 12:1), and plights to the Apennines were uniformly depicted as "unjust" (cf. Psalm 146).<sup>45</sup> To these notions, the second generation of the émigrés added the motive of sin due to "dogmatic errors" of their ancestors;<sup>46</sup> in some later accounts, this condemning notion was slightly alleviated in a way that the alleged ancestral dogmatic error was presented as an inevitable outcome of the Renaissance Fortuna.<sup>47</sup>

The memories of home that the émigrés from the Byzantine East projected in the Apennines were, obviously, individual recollections of their pasts. Some of these commemorative constructs were certainly highly selective



as they strategically aimed at reaching an Italian audience that was literate, well-educated, and close to the highest structures of the hosting powers. The attention of these circles certainly allowed the émigrés to “negotiate” their positions within the host societies in a way that allowed them to merge their home values with the new social expectations and thus attempt to improve a variety of favorable conditions in their new environments<sup>48</sup>—a stress on their real or claimed imperial alignment could easily enable useful marriage attachments to the local Italian nobility<sup>49</sup> while detailed references to their possessions “back home” were opportunities to improve the émigrés’ finances, just as the frequent mentions of their past services to the Byzantine Empire promised stable positions at the hosts’ courts and military troops.<sup>50</sup>

Memories of home by Eastern émigrés in the Apennines continued to exist among their offspring, born and educated in the new societies. The new generations too recollected their family pasts situationally, but in a different manner, usually presenting the homeland of their ancestors as an important formative space of the Classical Antiquity through which they could validate their new Italian identity. How Humanist “Italianization” of these memories exactly took place cannot be answered with precision because this discourse was commonly circulated and widely shared,<sup>51</sup> yet there is no doubt that during these processes individual recollections of the émigrés became the common *memoria*. Unlike memories of some other forced migrations that usually tended to preserve and maintain the émigrés’ collective recollection of their pasts, the *memoria* of home created and shaped by the offspring of the émigrés from the Byzantine East had a totally different aim—to affirm their new identities and further facilitate their full attachment to the new homes in the Apennine peninsula.

## NOTES

1. Nowadays, modern scholarship usually defines these memories as “diasporic.” More on this in Viaj Agnew (ed.), *Diaspora, Memory and Identity: A Search for Home* (Toronto, 2005); M. Chamberlain, “Diasporic Memories: Community, Individuality, and Creativity—A Life Stories Perspective,” *The Oral History Review* 36:2 (2009), pp. 177–87.

2. B. Tversky, “Remembering Spaces,” in E. Tulving and F. I. M. Craik (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Memory* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 363–78; J. W. Schooler and E. Eich, “Memory for Emotional Event,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Memory*, pp. 379–94; S. Küchler, “The Place of Memory,” in A. Forty and S. Küchler (eds.), *The Art of Forgetting* (Oxford, 2001, second paperback edition, first edition 1999), pp. 53–72.

3. Sometimes, the terms that usually refer to the émigrés as having narrowly escaped the Ottomans reflected their own “negotiating” narratives, rather than the

real circumstances of their alleged plights. For instance, while Thomas Palaiologos, Bosnian Queen mother Catherine (b. c. 1425–1478), or their entourage can indeed be called “exiles” from the Ottomans (also, “profugi,” “fugati,” etc.), the “exile” of Queen Charlotte of Lusignan (1444–1487) was just a direct consequence of her dethronement by her half-brother.

4. By “Byzantine East” here I mean the area of the Balkan Peninsula and other regions that were directly affected by the Ottoman expansion in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and from where the majority of the émigrés to the Apennines originated. In socio-cultural political terms, this region represents a common space closely linked with the Byzantine Empire. Similarly, the use of the term “Italy” pertains here not so much to particular political entities, but, rather, to the geo-context of the Apennine peninsula or its cultural perception (“Italianità” as defined by Petrarch in the fourteenth century). The term “Apennines,” however, will be used here to designate both the geographical frames and the political contexts that operated in the peninsula or adjacent territories (namely, the Venetian administration in the Eastern Adriatic and Greece). Defining the émigrés’ ethnic backgrounds is even more complex. Upon their arrival to the Apennines, all émigrés settled in one area were most often designated by the locals through the places of their origin/leader of their most dominant group. Some hosts obviously did not fully comprehend the actual ethnic differences among various émigrés, hence in some accounts one can find ambiguous denominations such as “greci albanesi,” “Epirotae,” or the descriptions of “Albanians settled in Calabria who speak Serbian language and have Serbian rituals” (V. d’Avino, *Cenni storici sulle chiese arcivescovili, vescovili e prelatizie* (Napoli, 1848), pp. 139, 117, 159); C. Porzio, *L’istoria d’Italia nell’ 1547 e la descrizione del Regno di Napoli* (Napoli, 1849), p. 151 (considering the émigrés as Greeks). This ambiguity was further complicated by the Humanist denominations of the émigrés through the terms that appealed to the Classical Antiquity. Hence some émigrés were described as “Achai” (d’Avino, *Cenni storici*, p. 580), “Illyrians” (*Pii secundi Pontificis Maximi Commentarii*, eds. I. Bellus and I. Boronkai [Budapest, 1993], vol. 1, chapter II, 35, p. 127, ln. 10; ch. III, 3, p. 564, ln. 10; cf. XII, 16, p. 580, ln. 26 “Illyridem”; cf. II, 35, p. 143 “Rasciani,” “Croatini,” “Dalmatae”; III, 6, pp. 142–3 “Bosnenses,” XII, 16, 580, ln. 26 “Servienses”), or “Macedoni” (P. P. Rodota, *Dell’ origine, progresso e stato presente del rito Greco in Italia III* [Roma, 1763], pp. 3, 53).

5. For some examples of this terminology, see the self-presentations of Božidar Vuković in his introductions to the Oktoich book and the Celebration Meneon printed in Venice 1536–1539, as from *Stari srpski zapisi i natpisi* (Old Serbian epigraphs and inscriptions), ed. M. Pavić (Belgrade, 1986), pp. 147–9; Carlo and Leonardo Tocco, in J. A. Buchon, *Nouvelles recherches historiques sur la Principauté française de Morée et ses hautes Baronnies*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1843), pp. 491–2; Constantine Lascaris, *Epistola ad Joannem Gatum Catanæ Episcopum*, in *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, series Graeca*, vol. 161, ed. J. P. Migne, vol. 161 (Paris, 1866), colls. 913–5; Bernardus Nerlius referring to Demetrios Chalcocondyles, in Konstantinos N. Sathas, (ed.), *Νεοελληνική φιλολογία: Βιογραφία ἰ τῶν ἐνγράμμασι διαλλαμνάντων Ἑλλήνων (1453–1821)* (Athens, 1868), p. 63; Epigram by Doukas Spandounes, in Sathas, *Νεοελληνική φιλολογία*, pp. 106–7; Giovanni Musachi, *Breve Memoria de li*



*Discendenti de nostra casa Musachi*, in K. Hopf (ed.), *Chroniques gréco-romanes inédits ou peu connues publiées avec notes et tables généalogiques* (Berlin, 1873, reprinted edition, Athens, 1961), p. 272.

6. A clear example of the situational use of these languages can be seen in the recollections by Tommaso Diplovatzio, *Memorie*, in K. N. Sathas, *Μνημεία Ἑλληνικῆς ιστορίας—Documents inédits relatifs à l'histoire de la Grèce au moyen âge*, vol. IX (Paris, 1890), pp. XXXI–IV, where the basic narration was done in the Italian vernacular, but documentary references about the family's connection to the ruling powers were quoted in Latin. For examples of favorable hosts' expressions as referred by some émigré nobles, see Musachi, *Breve Memoria*, pp. 272–3. On this issue, also see the conclusions by W. Miller, *The Latins in the Levant: A History of Frankish Greece (1204–1566)* (New York, 1908), p. 487; F. Babinger, "Das Ende der Arianiten," in *Sitzungsberichte der bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (München, 1960); J. Harris, *Greek émigrés in the West 1400–1520* (Camberley, 1995), pp. 62–84. For occasional cases of hostility shown to some émigrés, cf. D. Nicol, *Byzantium and Venice* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 416–8; J. Harris, "A Worthless Prince? Andreas Palaiologus in Rome," 1465–1502, *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 61 (1995), pp. 537–54. N. Bisaha, "Pope Pius II and the Crusade," in Norman Housley (ed.), *Crusading in the Fifteenth Century: Message and Impact* (Basingstoke, 2004), pp. 39–52, points out that the hosts' favor often pertained just to the émigré nobility, while on a lower social level there must have been a variety of negative stereotypes circulating about the newcomers and directly affecting them. The local population was especially ill-disposed towards Albanian migrants who were frequently qualified as "robbers" and "clandestines" (*latroni; vagantes*), for which reason their mobility was significantly restricted by their confinement to some specifically designated areas; see d'Avino, *Cenni storici*, pp. 580, 587–90.

7. Constantine Lascaris, *Letter to Juan Pardo in 1474*, in V. Labate, "Per la biografia de Costantino Lascari: nuovi documenti," *Archivio storico siciliano* 26 (1901), pp. 224–35; *Epistolae Quattuordecim familiares*, in Migne, PG 161, coll. 957; P. H. Boulboulidis, "Des epigrammes de Constantin Lascaris," *Byzantinoslavica* 26 (1965), pp. 291–4. These opinions of Lascaris are somewhat challenged by honorary terminology with which Ferdinand of Aragon addressed him in 1493, as from Labate, "Per la biografia," p. 233 (*nobili grecij Constantinopolitani; nobili misser constantino*); similarly, in L. Perroni Grande, "Per la storia di Messina e non per essa soltanto: appunti d' Archivio," *Archivio storico di Messina* 3 (1903), p. 272 (document of December 12, 1481). Also, Constantine was not always negative about his hosts, and he wrote about Sicily also in an affirmative manner, cf. his *Epistola ad Joannem Gatum*, in Migne, PG 161, colls. 913–5.

8. For the purposes of an initial consideration of this topic, in this chapter I shall refer only to the information of the published sources, while various pieces of unpublished material scattered through Italian and other European archives, still remain to be systematically explored. Also, it has to be pointed out that in some of its aspects this inquiry is limited to the records of the substantially literate, wealthy, and noble elite, while the perceptions of the indigenous émigrés will remain largely unknown due to the silence or comparative lack of the primary sources.

9. Among important historiography contributions on this topic, see W. Miller, "Balkan Exiles in Rome" in idem, *Essays on the Latin Orient* (Amsterdam, 1964, unchanged reprint from 1921), pp. 497–515; G. M. Monti, "La spediz ione in Puglia di Giorgio Castriota Scanderbeg," *Japigia* (new series) 10 (1939), pp. 298, 314–20; Harris, *Greek émigrés, passim*; Nicolae Iorga, "The Exiles," in *Byzantium after Byzantium*, introduction V. Candea (Oxford, 2000), pp. 31–56. Various contexts of some of these migrations were explored also in M. Balard and A. Ducellier (eds.), *Migrations et Diasporas Méditerranéennes (Xe–XVIe siècles), Colloque international, Conques 14-17 octobre 1999*, (Paris, 2002).

10. For major émigré individuals and communities in the Apennines, among other works, see G. Tocci, *Memorie storiche—legali dei comuni albanesi di S. Giorgio, Vaccarico, S. Cosimo, S. Demetrio e Macchia* (Consenza, 1869); G. Guelfi Camajani, *Descrizione bibliografica: Cenni storici genealogici della famiglia Paleologo* (Livorno, 1911); F. Savorognan, "Le colonie albanesi in Italia," *Nuova Antologia* 74: 1613 (1939), pp. 313–6; D. Ambrasi, "In margine all'immigrazione greca nell'Italia meridionale nei secoli XV e XVI," *Asprenas* 7:2 (1961), pp. 156–85; V. Giura, "La comunità greca di Napoli (1534–1861)," in *Storia di minoranze: Ebrei, greci, albanesi nel regno di Napoli* (Napoli, 1984), pp. 123–4; S. Anselmi, *Italia felix: Migrazioni slave ed albanesi in occidente: Romagna, Marche, Abruzzi, secoli XIV–XVI* (Ancona, 1988); K. P. Matscke, "The Notaras Family and its Italian Connections," *Dunbarton Oaks Papers* 49 (1995), pp. 59–72; T. Ganchou, "Le rachat des Notaras après la chute de Constantinople, ou les relations 'étrangères' de l'élite byzantine au XVe siècle," in Balard and Ducellier (eds.), *Migrations et Diasporas Méditerranéennes*, pp. 215–335; B. Doumerc, "Les Vénitiens confrontés au retour des repatriés de l'empire colonial d'outre-mer (fin XVe–début XVIe siècle)," in Balard and Ducellier (eds.), *Migrations et Diasporas Méditerranéennes*, pp. 389–97; C. Maltezou, "Άννα Παλαιολογίνα Νοταρά: μια τραγική μορφή ανάμεσα στον Βυζαντινό και τον νέο Έλληνικό κόσμο" (Venezia, 2004).

11. While the migrations of the Eastern rulers and nobility took place before or immediately after the Ottoman attacks on their lands, the migrations of the Greek intellectuals depended on a variety of other factors and represented a long process that can be chronologically followed throughout the entire fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The migrations of commoners (usually the stratiots) took place in several major stages, and seem to have been most intense cc. 1439 (related to the Florentine Union); 1461–1470 (following the fall of Morea); 1470–1478 (Ottoman conquests in western Greece and Albania); 1533–34 (the fall of Coron). Importantly, the migration waves after 1453 represent just one stage among many other instances of human fluctuation and interactions that took place between the Apennines and the Balkans since the times of the ancient Magna Graecia, the immediate Byzantine rule there, or political interactions just prior to or during the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans, so it should, by no means, be seen as an encounter of two distant or unknown worlds. More on these interactions, R. Weiss, "The Greek Culture of Southern Italy in the Later Middle Ages," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 37 (1951), pp. 23–50; D. J. Geanakoplos, *Interaction of Sibling Byzantine and Western Cultures in the Middle Ages and Italian Renaissance (330–1600)* (New Heaven and London, 1976); C. R. Zach, "Familles



nobles Italiennes d'origine grecque," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 32:6 (1982), pp. 19–27; S. Settis (ed.), *Storia della Calabria*, vol. 1 (Roma–Reggio Calabria, 1988); C. Capizzi, "Le radici bizantine della cultura degli Albanesi in Italia," *Rivista storica del Mezzogiorno* 28 (1993), pp. 3–28. G. A. Loud, "Byzantium and Southern Italy (876–1000)," in *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire, c. 500–1492*, ed. J. Shepard (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 560–82; G. Cavallo, "Between Byzantium and Rome: Manuscripts from Southern Italy," in O. Z. Pevny (ed.), *Perceptions of Byzantium and Its Neighbors (843–1261)* (New York, 2000), pp. 136–53.

12. Cf. Harris, *Greek émigrés*, pp. 21–4, who points to a difference between the Easterners who temporarily visited the European West in order to seek help around the time close to the fall of Constantinople, and the true émigrés whose settlement there was on a permanent basis.

13. Rodota, *Dell' origine*, III, pp. 61–127; A. Lehasca, *Cenno storico dei servigi militari nel Regno delle Due Sicilie dai Greci, Epiroti, Albanesi, e Macedoni in epoche diverse* (Corfu, 1843); E. Pontiere, *La Calabria a metà del secolo XV e la rivolta di Antonio Centelles* (Napoli, 1963); P. Petta, *Stradioti: Soldati albanesi in Italia (sec. XV–XVI)* (Lecce, 1996). Cf. M. Mandalà, *Mundus vult decipi: I miti della storiografia arbëreshe* (Palermo, 2007), esp. pp. 66–7, 103, 140–3, suggesting that some of the materials attesting to the feudal concessions to the Albanian stratiots may have been forged. Also, cf. Iorga, "The Exiles," p. 35.

14. Miller, "Balkan Exiles in Rome," pp. 497–515; G. Hill, *A History of Cyprus* (Cambridge, 2010), a digitally printed version from the one published in 1952), vol. 3; Harris, "A Worthless Prince?," pp. 537–54; Harris, *Greek émigrés*, p. 110 and n. 124. A. Mercati, "Documenti pontifici su persone e cose del Mar Egeo e di Cipro poco dopo la caduta di Constantinopoli," *Orientalia Christiana periodica* 20 (1954), pp. 94–5, for some other, non-ruling figures who also sought the protection of the pontifical Curia (e.g., according to the Boule of Sixtus IV, of November 5 1471, to "Francesco di Giorio Cibe" of the city of "Eneo").

15. G. Mercati, *Per la cronologia della vita e degli scritti di Niccolò Perotti archivescovo di Siponto* (Rome, 1925); J. D. Geanakoplos, *Greek Scholars in Venice: Studies in Dissemination of Greek Learning from Byzantium to Western Europe* (Cambridge, Mass., 1962); G. Holmes, *The Florentine Enlightenment* (New York, 1969), pp. 250–56; J. D. Geanakoplos, *Constantinople and the West: Essays on the Late Byzantine (Palaeologean) and Italian Renaissances and the Byzantine and Roman Churches* (Madison, 1989); N. G. Wilson, *From Byzantium to Italy: Greek Studies in the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore, 1992); J. Monfassani, *Byzantine Scholars in Renaissance Italy: Cardinal Bessarion and Other Émigrés* (London: Variorum, 1995); N. Bisaha, *Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks* (Philadelphia, 2004).

16. I. Thomson, "Manuel Chrysoloras and the Early Italian Renaissance," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 7:1 (1966), pp. 63–82; Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, pp. 94, 117. Geanakoplos, *Constantinople and the West*, p. 66. Chrysoloras's anti-Ottoman discourse was further shaped by the most important Greek scholars of the time, among whom certainly were Theodore Gaza, John Argyropoulos, Demetrios Kydones, George of Trebizond, and Janus Lascaris.

17. F. A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (London: 2007 reprint, first published in 1966), pp. 51–3.

18. R. Lopez, "Il principio della guerra veneto-turca nel 1463," *Archivio Veneto*, ser. 5, 15 (1934), pp. 45–131.

19. Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, pp. 94, 111.

20. Giovanni Musachi, *Breve memoria*, pp. 278, 280, 289–90 (in his account, the reference to his family's ancestral land is usually combined with the reference to the allegations on its various important genealogical connections); *Chronicle of Hugues de Busac*, in Edith Brayer and Victor Laurent, "Le Vaticanus Latinus 4789: Histoire et alliances des Cantacuzènes aux XIV–XV siècles," *Revue des Études Byzantines* 9 (1951), p. 73; Epitaph of Demetrius Cabacius Rhalles (*equiti Spartano*), in Sathas, *Νεοελληνική φιλολογία*, p. 76. The stressed possessions in the émigrés' memories of home did not comprise just their lands, but also of various precious goods and other memorabilia they brought with them, especially relics; see e.g., Theodore Spandugnino (Theodorus Spandugnes), *De la origine deli Imperatori Ottomani, ordine dela Corte, forma del guerre gg iare loro, religione, rito, et costumi de la natione*, in *Documents inédits relatifs à l'histoire de la Grèce au Moyene Âge*, in Konstantinos N. Sathas (ed.), *Μνημεία Ἑλληνικῆς ιστορίας*—Documents inédits relatifs à l'histoire de la Grèce au moyen âge, vol. 9 (Paris, 1890), p. 167. Upon their migration, these items were usually kept within a family, but they were also used in a more practical manner, for instance, to reinforce the émigrés' finances, or demonstrate the social rank of the emigrated nobles. For such examples, see *Pii secundi Pontificis Maximi Commentarii*, VIII, 1, pp. 367–8 (head of Apostle Andrew transferred by Thomas Palaiologos to Pope Pius II); Rodota, *Dell' origine*, III, p. 89 b, mentioning the commemorative importance which the relic of John Chrysostomos held by 'Conte Alessio da Costantinopoli' had for the local community of his new home in Altomonte. Testamentary letter of George Crnojević to his wife Elizabeth Erizzo (1499, August 22, in I. Kukuljević-Sakcinski, "Oporuka kneza Jure Crnovića od god. 1499" (The last will of George Crnojević from 1499), *Arkiv za poviestnicu jugoslavensku* II (1852), p. 42; Buchon, *Nouvelles recherches*, vol. 1, pp. 491–2 (Tocco case); Zacharias Kaliergis, in Sathas, *Νεοελληνική φιλολογία*, p. 121; Epitaph of Ferdinando Tocco in Madrid (d. December 23, 1535), in Buchon, *Nouvelles recherches*, vol. 2, p. 328. More on the focus on land by the emigrant nobility, see G. G. Alberti, *Proteste e memorie territoriali di dinastie spodestate dall' invasione ottomana* (Bologna, 1921).

21. Lascaris, in Migne, PG 161, coll. 915, in his letter to Ferdinand, at the time Vice-King of Sicily, added some elements common for the Humanist discourse (allegations about his homeland attacked by Ottoman barbarians), or the lack of the Ottomans' sense of piety in his *Epistulae quattuordecim familiares*, in Migne, PG 161, colls. 958 and 963. Epitaph of Giovanni Musachi, p. 314 (*suis finibus Turcarum tyrannide electo*). For a similar perception by the Tocco, *Liber ceremoniarum Sixti IV*, as quoted from Buchon, *Nouvelles recherches*, vol. 2, p. 101.

22. For some examples of expressions that illustrate these stages, see Janus Lascaris's epitaph in V. Forcella, *Iscrizioni delle chiese e d'altri edifice di Roma dal secolo XI fino ai giorni nostri*, vol. 10 (Roma, 1877), no. 572, f. 348, ad annum 1537: TERRA ALIENA GRAVIS NON DULCEM SENSIT DOLET HOC QUOD PATRIA



[. . .]; the epitaph of Thomas Demetrios Asanes Palaiologos (church S. Giovanni Maggiore in Naples), in Domenico Ambrasi, "In margine dell'immigrazione greca," p. 156. Cf. Miller, *The Latins*, p. 406; N. Zečević, "Searching for Acceptance: A Fifteenth-Century Refugee's History," *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU* 6 (2000), pp. 129–43.

23. Spandugino, *De la origine*, pp. 139 and 144; the epitaph by Janus Lascaris, in Forcella, *Iscrizioni*, vol. 10, no. 572, p. 348.

24. E.g., one of Bessarion's epitaphs (Graecia me genuit, fovit Italis ora, galero/Roma colit; vita sum Numa, et arte Plato), as from Sathas, *Νεοελληνική φιλολογία*, p. 32; for an epitaph on Gazas by Politiano ('Ελλάς γὰρ τέκε τὸν γ', Ἀυσονίη >δ' ἔτρεφεν), *ibid.*, p. 39; George of Trebizond to Guarino Veronese, in Sathas, *Νεοελληνική φιλολογία*, p. 43, n. 2 ([. . .] *ne me in Graecia ortum, sed Romae, nec his temporibus, sed Ciceronis aetate praedicares*).

25. J. Monfassani, "In praise of Ognibene and blame of Guarino: Andronicus Contoblacas' invective against Niccolo Botano and the citizens of Brescia," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 52 (1990), pp. 309–21 (reprinted in *idem, Byzantine Scholars in Italy*, no. XI). This perception was particularly commemorated on epitaphs, e.g., that of John Argyropoulos or Artidorom Joppol ("the captain of the 'Greek nation'"), or the epitaph of Belisarius Corentius, famous Neapolitan artist of Greek origin, dated to 1615 (ex antique Arcadum genere [. . .] nobilis Arcas erat alter vere protogenes incola Partenopes); Epitaph created for Marcus Musurus ([. . .] Regna latina petunt et erat Musurus in illis/ Hospicio ictuntur hospitis ante sui/ Nunc etiam bustum, grata pietate sepulti/Officii quamvis sedulitate colunt), as from Sathas, *Νεοελληνική φιλολογία*, p. 84.

26. Judging from the reflections of their self-presentations, the stratiots usually tended to connect their military positions in Italy with their past military service, thus giving an impression that they had already been established in the higher military circles of their homeland. See Sathas, *Μνήμερα*, vol. IX, f. 3, no. DXXI (1548, June 9). Memory of Carlo and Leonardo Tocco to the Vice-King of Naples, (1490), in Buchon, *Nouvelles recherches*, vol. 1, p. 491.

27. E.g., the Memory of Carlo and Leonardo Tocco to the Vice-King of Naples (1490), in Buchon, *Nouvelles recherches* 1, p. 491.

28. E.g., Giovanni Musachi, *Breve memoria*, pp. 294–5 (*E quando troverete Dispoto, sappiate che vol dire Principe*); pp. 278–80 for his use of the title of Sebastocrator (*Sebaston Crator* [. . .] *vuol dire Capitano generale del Imperadore* and further elaborations on p. 279); Giovanni's son Constantine also added his own perceptions of the title of Despot in Musachi, *Breve memoria*, pp. 308–13. On the situational use of the title of Despot among the Tocco family, see Jacobus Gherardi da Volterra, *Il diario Romano*, in E. Carusi (ed.), *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, vol. 23: 3a (new series) (Città di Castello, 1904), p. 12, ad annum 1480; Buchon, *Nouvelles recherches*, vol. 1, p. 491. Cf. Forcella, *Iscrizioni*, vol. 2, no. 39, p. 13, an epitaph of Giovanni Tocco in the church of St. Maria Nuova in Rome (1511): "IOANNES. TOCHO. SER.mo. DNO. ARTHE. DESPOTO. [. . .]." More on self-proclaimed Despots of the sixteenth century (including Hungarian and local usages), see Sima Ćirković, "Postvizantijski despoti," *Zbornik radova vizantološkog instituta* 38 (1999–2000), pp. 399–401.

29. Buchon, *Nouvelles recherches*, vol. 1, pp. 491–2.

30. G. Reccho, *Notizie di famiglie nobili, ed illustri della Città, e Regno di Napoli* (Napoli, 1717), p. 50, noted that the Tocco repatriates born in Italy succeeded to enter the royal *Anticamera de' Titoli in Palazzo* only during the second generation born in Italy (mid-sixteenth century). For the military and diplomatic careers of the Tocco repatriates born in Italy, Buchon, *Nouvelles recherches*, vol. 2, p. 328; Miller, *The Latins*, p. 488. On diplomatic service of "Constantino Comneno duca di Acaja e Macedonia" at the pontifical court and the court of Emperor Maximilian I (1493–1519); Franz Miklošić, "Marija kći Angelinina i Konstantin Arijanit," *Rad Jugoslavenske Akademije znanosti i umjetnosti* 12 (1870), p. 3; V. Giura, "Note sugli albanesi d'Italia nel mezzogiorno," *Società italiana di Demografia Storica* (2008), p. 4 (at [http://sides.uniud.it/tl\\_files/sides/papers/4\\_Giura.pdf](http://sides.uniud.it/tl_files/sides/papers/4_Giura.pdf) March 26, 2013). Among the commoner émigrés who reached significant army positions and noble status upon their migration to Italy, one can find a Demetrio Lecca of Naples (mentioned in 1798), whose men served in the Macedonian regiment of the Kingdom of Two Sicilies, as from A. Leh, *Cenno storico dei servigi militari prestati nel Regno delle Due Sicilie dai Greci Epiroti Albanesi e Macedoni in epoche diverse* (Corfu, 1843), p. 98; a signor Attanasio Gliichi di nazione Epirota, domiciliato e proprietario di beni fondi in Napoli and a Conte Strati-Gicca, potente signore [. . .] Egli medesimo condusse quella gente, e l'accompagn [the bataglion of the "Macedonians," NZ] nella piazza di Capua [. . .], as from Leh, *Cenno storico*, pp. 15–6; or the rinomati Pieri, Garzoni, Andruzzi, Spiro, Lecca, Girardi, Nina, De Micheli, Blasi, Baninch as from Leh, *Cenno storico*, p. 18.

31. For an example of the intentional use of the title of Despot by Božidar Vuković and its later interpretation by his son Vincenzo, see Ćirković, "Despots," p. 398, notes 10 and 12.

32. Cf. P. Petta, *Despots d'Epiro e principi di Macedonia: Esuli albanesi nell'Italia del Risorgimento* (Lecce, 2000). To Zach ("Familles nobles Italiennes," p. 21), the advancement of some individuals was a consequence of their conversion to Catholicism.

33. For the heraldic shield of the Vassallo family that reflected their claim for lineage with the Byzantine imperial family, see an online excerpt from A. Mango di Casalgerardo, *Nobiliario di Sicilia: Notizie e stemmi relative alle famiglie nobili siciliane*, vol. 2 (Napoli, 1915), p. 282, at [www.regione.sicilia.it/beniculturali/biblioteca-centrale/mango/valle.htm](http://www.regione.sicilia.it/beniculturali/biblioteca-centrale/mango/valle.htm), March 25, 2013. For the claims by the Valentino family of Reggio Calabria to ancestral lineage to Constantinople (today still circulated within the family), see [www.ilportaledelsud.org/greco-albanesi\\_2.htm](http://www.ilportaledelsud.org/greco-albanesi_2.htm), March 25, 2013, under Valentino. For the claims by the Contantino (Constantini) of Palermo, see V. Spredi, *Enciclopedia Storico-Nobiliare Italiana: famiglie nobile e titolate viventi riconosciute del R. Governo d'Italia* (Milano, 1929), vol. II, p. 564. For the inscription of these families to the Italian nobility during a period prior to the Unification, see *Annuario della nobiltà italiana*, ed. Andre Borella, n. serie, edizione XXXI, S.A.G.I., vol. IV, pt. V, nos. 175, 19290, 19291, 19164 (for Alati, Vassallo, Valentino).

34. For an introduction to some interpretation models, see G. M. Spiegel, "Genealogy: Form and Function in Medieval Historiography," in *eadem, The Past*



as Text: *The Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography* (Baltimore–London, 1997), pp. 101–3; G. Althoff, J. Fried, and P. J. Geary (eds.), *Medieval Concepts of the Past: Ritual, Memory, Historiography* (New York, 2000); M. Brunn and J. Glaser (eds.), *Negotiating Heritage: Memories of the Middle Ages*, (Turnhout, 2009).

35. Giovanni Musachi, *Breve memoria*, pp. 281, 299, attempting to connect himself with various significant figures of the medieval Balkans (Skenderbey, St. Sava of the Serbian Nemanjić family, etc.), regardless of whether these connections were indeed true. For his connection to Skenderbey as claimed by Albanian émigrés, see Rodota, *Dell' origine*, III, p. 27 (*prole della linea mascolina del invito Scender-beg* [ . . . ] *della felice memoria* [ . . . ]).

36. A selective use of the past can also be seen from the name-giving patterns of the exiles' children born in the Apennines regardless of their previous local patterns. At first sight, one might conclude that these patterns commemorated the important persons from the families' "Greek" past because most of the names were Greek. However, a closer look reveals that these names expressed the Humanist preferences of the Homeric characters and classical Greek mythology quoted in their Latinized forms (e.g., Ettore, Polyxena, Dejanaira, Andronica, Pentesilea); see the genealogies of the Musachi, Tocco, and Arianiti in Hopf, *Chroniques*, pp. 530, 534–5; Miklošić, "Marija Angelina," p. 5.

37. For some examples of the émigrés' alleged connections to the Byzantine imperial families (usually, through a distant obscure line), see Giovanni Musachi, *Breve memoria*, pp. 275, 294–5 (Komnenoi and Angeloi), but also in the form of a general reference, p. 278 (*dicono la nostra progenie procede dalla città de Constantinopoli*); Spandugnino, *De la origine deli Imperatori Ottomani*, pp. 138, 157–9, who calls himself "*patritio Constantinopolitano*." Rodota, *Dell' origine*, III, p. 99, for the nobility claims of Makarios Melissenos and his brother. An epitaph of Alfonso Maniquez (1621) in the church of Patri riformati di Santa Maria di Gesu nelle campagne di Palermo, as from Tsitseles, *Κεφαλληνιακά σύμμικτα*, Vol. 1. Athens, 1904, p. 110, attesting to the Tocco "royal" (apparently, Byzantine imperial) connections: *Eram de sanguine Ream/Cui genus et patria Bethica terra tulit./Carus ego Mariae Tocco de Stemmal Graium/Cui genus a quo idem sanguinis extat honor*. Buchon, *Nouvelles recherches*, Vol 1, pp. 491–2 (memory relation to Vice-King of Naples, 1490). Epitaph on the tomb of Constantine Castrioti in the convent of Santa Maria la Nova church in Naples as from a photo at [www.nobili-napoletani.it/Castrioti.htm](http://www.nobili-napoletani.it/Castrioti.htm), March 25, 2013: *CONSTANTINVS CASTRAYOTUS HIC/TEGITVR SANGVINE ET CONGNATIONE/REGIA AC CAESAREA CLARVS* [ . . . ]; cf. the epitaph's reading proposed by A. Di Sena, *S. Maria la Nova a Napoli: fondazione e trasformazioni del complesso conventuale (secoli XIII–XX)*, PhD thesis defended at the Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II, Facoltà di Architettura (Napoli, 2005), no pagination ([www.fedoa.unina.it/2561/1/Di\\_Sena\\_Storia\\_dell\\_Architettura\\_e\\_della\\_Citta.pdf](http://www.fedoa.unina.it/2561/1/Di_Sena_Storia_dell_Architettura_e_della_Citta.pdf), March 25, 2013): *COSTANTINUS CASTRIOTUS HIC TEGITUR SANGVINE ET COGNATIONE/AC CESAREA* [ . . . ]. Cf. G. Rocco, *Il convento e la chiesa di S. Maria la Nova di Napoli nella storia e nell'arte* (Napoli, 1928), pp. 280–3.

38. For some examples, see the epitaph of Theodolinda Polissena Erina Baffa, in the church of Santa Sofia d'Epiro (n. 14. V 1555–December 25, 1593), as from

Nobili Napoletani, at [www.nobili-napoletani.it/Baffa-Trasci.htm](http://www.nobili-napoletani.it/Baffa-Trasci.htm), March 25, 2013): *D.O.M./IN PERPETUAM MEMORIAM/THEODOLINDAE ERINAE/TRASCI/DE GEORGI ET IPPOITA BECCI/UXORQUE STEFANI BAFFA/HERES NOBILISSIMAE STIRPIS/MALIDAE/ILLUSTRISSIMAEQUE GENTIS/COMNENII/REGIO SANGVINE/THESSALONICAE FUT/ANNO AETATIS SUAE XXXVIII/PERIIT A.D. MDXCIII*. Also, the epitaph of Giovanni Musachi, as from a reference by his son Constantine, in Giovanni Musachi, *Breve memoria*, p. 314 (*sanguine e cognatione Regia, ex urbe Bizantis oriundo, suis finibus Turcarum tyrannide eiecto*); Memory of Carlo and Leonardo Tocco to the Vice-King of Naples, (1490), in Buchon, *Nouvelles recherches*, vol. 1, p. 491 (connecting themselves to the dynasties of "Servia" and Paleologoi, whom with they were indeed aligned, but also to the Komnenoi who were not their immediate relatives); De Busac, pp. 70–3, for his link with the Komnenoi. For an example of the continuation of similar claims in some later epochs, see Mango di Casalgerardo, *Nobiliario di Sicilia*, vol. 2, p. 282 (on the Vassallo family of Palermo, who alleged, as it seems more intensively since the nineteenth century, their link with the Palaiologoi). For a general insight into these claims, see F. Rodriguez, *Le famiglie porfirogenite* (Napoli, 1933).

39. For various legendary layers of the Musachi genealogy, cf. Giovanni Musachi, *Breve memoria*, pp. 302–4, 308, 312 (the account of his son Constantine), influenced by the Humanists, hence connecting his ancestors to Rome of Numa Pompilius and Augustus, "spanning" this epoch with the Byzantine lineage and a reference to Emperor Constantine, and further, with all significant rulers of the medieval Balkans. For the Tocco hint to their origin from the Goths, see an epitaph on the grave of Ferdinand Tocco by Constantine Lascaris in Madrid (1535): *REGES TOCCORUM MIGRAVIMUS IN AUSONIAM TERRAM, QUANDO GETARUM MARS FUREBAT IN ITALIA*. In his epigrams, Janus Lascaris connected his alleged imperial origin with the Antiquity, or the heroic ancestry of the Homeric epics, see Sathas, *Νεοελληνική φιλολογία*, pp. 113–6.

40. Musachi, *Breve memoria*, p. 314, quoting an epitaph of Giovanni Musachi in the church of *Francavilla in terra di Otranto* (1510): *ex urbe Bizantis oriundi bicipitem aquillam habentis insigne coronatam*. G. Conforti, *Il Patriciato Greco* (Napoli, 1919). For the claims about the imperial connection (expressed in their heraldry by an image of a double-headed eagle) by several Greek families settled on Cephalonia and mentioned by the Venetians as noble in the sixteenth century (Foca, Loverdo, Marchetti, Melissino, Schiadan, Valsamaschi), see E. Rizo Rangabè, *Livre d'or de la noblesse ionienne*, vol. II (Athens, 1926); also, see N. K. Fokas, *To κάστρο Αγ. Γεωργίου Κεφαλληνίας: η παλαιά πρωτεύουσα της νήσου* (Athens, 1966), p. 52, n. 49, quoting a sixteenth-century Venetian inscription at the entrance of St. George castle of Cephalonia with some of these names also mentioned there as noble. Cf. *Repertorio genealogico delle famiglie confermate nobili e dei titolati nobili esistenti nelle provincie venete*, ed. F. Schroeder (Venezia, 1830–1831), 2 vols. For the Alati, Vassallo, Valentino inscribed as having already been nobles in Italy of the pre-Unitary period, see *Annuario della nobiltà italiana*, ed. Andre Borella, n. serie, edizione XXXI, S.A.G.I., vol. IV, pt. V, nos. 175, 19290, 19291, 19164.



41. As it is widely known, the majority of the exiled rulers in the Apennines were Catholic or, at least, formally supported the Union. Another circle of predominantly Catholic émigrés were the repatriating Italian nobles.

42. Rodota, *Dell' origine*, III, pp. 11–37, 60–146, 235; V. G. Meola, *Delle Istorie della chiesa greca in Napoli esistente* (Napoli, 1790), p. 100. Cf. L. Allacci, *De aetate et interstitiis in collatione Ordinum apud Grecos servandis* (Roma, 1638), pp. 5–14, and F. P. Ruggiero, *Intorno al diritto dei Greci cattolici di rivendicare la parrocchia greca di Napoli* (Napoli, 1870). Also see, d'Avino, *Cenni storici*, pp. 461, 587–90; J. de Gay, "Notes sur la consecration du rite grec dans la Calabre et dans la terre d'Otrante au XIVe siècle," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 4 (1895), pp. 59–66; C. Korolevskij, "Le vicende ecclesiastiche dei paesi Italo-albanesi della Bailicata e della Calabria, I (Barile)," *Archivio storico per la Calabria e Lucania* I (1931), pp. 43–68; idem, "Le vicende ecclesiastiche dei paesi Italo-albanesi della Bailicata e della Calabria, II (Plataci)," in *Archivio storico per la Calabria e Lucania* IV (1934), pp. 207–17; V. Peri, *Chiesa romana e "rito" greco*, G. A. Santoro e la *Congregazione dei Greci, 1566–1596* (Brescia, 1975); Zach, "Familles nobles Italiennes," p. 21; G. Veneziano, "Contrasti confessionali ed ecclesiastici tra Albanesi greco-ortodossi o cattolici e cattolici latini in Calabria e Lucania (dalle origini delle colonie al 1919)," *Archivio storico per la Calabria e la Lucania* 36 (1968), pp. 89–115; F. Altimari, *Le minoranze linguistiche albanesi in Italia: profile storicoletterari, antropologici e giuridico-istituzionali*, in F. Altimari, M. Bolognari, and P. Carrozza (eds.), *L'esilio della parola* (Pisa, 1986), p. 5; A. Vaccaro, "Riflessi di cultura religiosa bizantina nel mezzogiorno d'Italia: il caso degli Albanesi (secoli XV–XVI)," *Archivio storico per la Calabria e la Lucania* 72 (2005), pp. 83–137.

43. For the limitations of the Venetian conditions to the confession of the Orthodox rite to Anna Notara (June 18, 1475; September 27, 1480; May 26 1487), see Sathas, *Μνημεία*, vol. IX, pp. XXXVII, XXXVIII–XL; for some other similar cases of commoners' practices, see d'Avino, *Cenni storici*, pp. 68, 159, 161, 359, 461, 580, 587–90.

44. Giovanni Musachi, *Breve memoria*, p. 299. In their accounts, the émigrés tended to connect themselves with the most popular figures engaged in the resistance to the Ottomans; among the most prominent ones were Skenderbey, János Hunyadi, and Stephen the Great of Moldavia (all were entitled *athleta Christi* by the pontifical Curia), so it is of no wonder why many émigrés tended to associate their pasts with them.

45. Giovanni Musachi, *Breve memoria*, p. 272; da Volterra, *Il diario Romano*, ad ann. 1480, p. 12. Constantine Lascaris, in Migne, PG 161, colls. 913–5.

46. Bessarion, *Απόκρισις πρὸς τὰ τοῦ Ἑρέσου κεφάλαια*, in Migne, PG 161, colls. 138–9; *Ἐπιστολὴ ἡ καθολικὴ ἡ*, in Migne, PG 161, colls. 454–5. In the same context, Giovanni Musachi, *Breve memoria*, p. 300. Cf. Spandugnino, *De la origine deli Imperatori Ottomani*, ed. Sathas, p. 172.

47. I. D. McFarlane, "The Renaissance Epitaph," *The Modern Language Review* 81:4 (1986), pp. xxv–xxxv.

48. J. G. Ball, "Poverty, Charity, and the Greek Community," *Studi Veneziani* (new series) 6 (1982), pp. 129–60, Monfassani, *Byzantine Scholars*, p. 54; Harris,

*Greek émigrés*, pp. 9–39; Petta, *Despoti d'Epiro e principi di Macedonia*, pp. 7–8, 151. Some evidence which Giura, "Note sugli albanesi d'Italia," p. 3, retrieved shows that the situation was more or less similar for the Albanian soldiers whom the vice-royal decrees strictly limited from freely circulating to the spaces where they could not be controlled in order to prevent them from robbing. K. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant, 1204–1571*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia, 1978, reprint 1997), pp. 138–61; V. Giura, "La vita economica degli Albanesi in Calabria nei sec. XV–XVIII," in C. Rotelli (ed.), *Gli Albanesi di Calabria*, vol. I (Cosenza, 1990). References about the émigrés' bad finances (e.g., Giovanni Musachi, *Breve memoria*, p. 272), put together with the fact that the major number of the Balkan émigrés of the first generation was surrounded by their compatriots in Naples or Venice, challenge the opinion of Zach ("Familles nobles Italiennes," p. 22), who does not accept that there was a major decline of the émigrés' social status upon their settlement.

49. Musachi, *Breve memoria*, p. 288. Y. Ascher, 'Renaissance commemoration in Naples: The Rota Chapel in San Pietro a Maiella,' *Renaissance Studies* 14:2 (2000), pp. 190–209; idem, 'Politics and Commemoration in Renaissance Naples: the case of Caterina Pignatelli,' *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 69:2 (2006), pp. 145–68.

50. For some examples of the connections with the local nobility (not necessarily of the highest rank), see De Busac, p. 73; Giovanni Musachi, *Breve memoria* (the part written by Constantine Musachi), p. 304; Hopf, *Chroniques*, pp. 530, 534–5 (genealogies of the Tocco, Musachi, Arianiti are partly inaccurate, but still reflect well these families' marriage mutual connections during their settlement in Italy).

51. Sathas, *Νεοελληνική φιλολογία*, *passim*; Geanakoplos, Constantinople, *passim* on various personal connections between the émigrés. Their connections and circulation of memory (especially of their personal memory annotations) are also confirmed by Giovanni Musachi, *Breve Memoria*, p. 297, and annotations of his son Constantine, pp. 304, 308, 315–35. For an example of a theme shared in the recollection of a few individual émigrés, see G. M. Monti, "Una leggendaria principessa Angioina moglie di un dinasta Albanese," in idem, *Nuovi Studi Angioini* (Trani, 1937), pp. 587–91. For the stratotic songs that shared some of the discourse about the hardship of their "exile," see Sathas, *Μνημεία*, vol. VII (Paris, 1888), pp. 188, 218–9, 223–7.



## Index

- Abdera, 13  
 Achaia, 122  
 Adam, 85, 86  
*adelphaton*, 42, 43  
 Adrianople, 8, 9, 11  
 Adriatic, 4, 93, 167, 172, 174, 175,  
     178n13, 180n25, 198, 201, 203n4  
 Aegean, 13, 23  
 Agnes of Antioch, 3  
 Akapniou monastery, 43  
 Akindynos, Gregory, 108, 110  
 Akropolites, George, 18n18, 31, 95  
 Albania, 73, 74;  
     Albanian Tower, 127, 128, 131, 132,  
     133, 134  
 Alexandru Aldea, 119  
 Alexandru Lăpușneanul, 130, 134  
 Alexandru the Good, 131  
 Alexios I Komnenos, 9, 34  
 Alexios III Angelos, 4, 5, 11, 14, 20n61,  
     34, 92, 93  
*amygdalos*, 86  
 Anagnostes, John, 45  
 Anatolia, 33, 92  
 Anchialos, 5, 6, 11  
 Andronikos I Komnenos, 4, 34, 36, 73  
 Andronikos II Palaiologos, 74, 93,  
     96, 97  
 Angelos, Constantine, 8, 9  
 Angelos, John (*sebastokrator*), 8  
 Anna (Alexios III Angelos's daughter),  
     94  
 Anna (Enrico Dandolo's  
     granddaughter), 93, 94  
 Anna Komnene, 74  
 Anna (Michael VIII Palaiologos's  
     daughter), 95, 96  
 Anna of Savoy, 27  
 Anna (Theodore Angelos's daughter),  
     94  
*anticentrism*, xi, xii  
 Antzista, 44  
 Apamea, 84  
 Apennines, the, 197, 198, 199, 201, 202,  
     203n4  
 Arcadia, 198  
 archangel Michael, 86  
 Argyrokastron. *See* Gjirokastra  
 Argyropoulos, John, 45  
 Aristotelian, 198  
 Arkadiopolis, 5, 8, 10, 11  
 Armenian Kingdom, 33  
 Asen (Vlach-Bulgarian leader), 5, 6, 7,  
     8, 12, 33  
 Asia Minor, 23, 33, 34, 37, 94, 98  
 Asiatic cities, 34  
 Aspietes, Alexios, 12  
 Athens, 35

- Athonite (monasteries, etc). *See* Athos  
 Athos, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 50, 52, 53, 82,  
 94, 104, 105, 107-9, 110, 111,  
 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123,  
 126, 128-29, 130, 131, 132, 133,  
 134, 135-37, 138, 139  
 Avars, the, 31  
 Balkan, Balkans, the, xi, xii, xiii, xiv,  
 3, 5, 9, 10, 23, 37, 76, 83, 94, 97,  
 98, 108, 113, 119, 122, 139, 165,  
 167, 187, 198, 200;  
 Byzantine, 4, 15;  
 Central, 165, 167, 176;  
 frontiers, 4;  
 medieval, xi;  
 northern, 4, 5, 9, 11, 13, 16;  
 Orthodox states of, 139;  
 Orthodoxy, 139;  
 western, 3, 5, 10, 14, 15, 16  
 Balkanization, xiii, xviii  
 "balkanized Byzantinists," xivn2  
 Barlaam of Calabria, 107, 108  
 Bartlett, Robert, xiii  
 Basarab Matei. *See* Matei Basarab  
 Basarab the Younger, 127, 128, 129,  
 134, 138  
 Basil I, 104  
 Basil II, 74  
 Basil III of Muscovy, 124  
 Bayezid II, 124, 126, 127, 138  
 Béla IV, 172  
 Béla-Alexios (Béla III, Hungarian king),  
 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 14, 33  
 Belgrade, 4, 11, 14, 133  
 Berislavić, the, 135  
 Beroe, 11  
 Bessarion, 198, 199  
 Bethesda, 86  
 Bezalel, 86  
 Bitola, 125  
 Bitovnja Mt., 170  
 Bjelašnica Mt., 170  
 Black Sea, 5, 11, 13  
 Blastares, Mathew, 132  
 Blažuj, 167, 174  
 Bloch, Marc, 166  
 βοεβόδας. *See* Therianos, Michael  
 Voevod  
 Bogdan II, 130, 131  
 Bogdan-Vlad, 131  
 Bogomil(s), 82, 83, 87, 105, 106, 107,  
 108, 109, 110, 112  
 Bosna, 169, 174  
 Bosnia, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170,  
 171, 172, 173, 175, 176, 174,  
 187, 193;  
 sanjak of, 187  
 Bosnia, the river, 167, 169, 170,  
 173, 174  
 Bosnian:  
 church, 166;  
 king, kingdom, 175-76;  
 medieval history, 175-76;  
 noble families, 168;  
 queen-mother Catherina, 198;  
 ruler, 168, 172;  
 state, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171,  
 172, 173, 174, 176  
 Bosphorus, 31  
 Bouthrint, 76  
 Boutsas monastery, 74  
 Branas, Alexios, 9  
 Brand, Ch. M., 170  
 Braničevo, 4, 14, 187  
 Branković, the, 126, 129, 132, 133, 134;  
 Angelina, 135;  
 "Cantacuzina," 126, 127;  
 Despina-Milica, 129;  
 Djuradj (son of Angelina, brother of  
 Jovan), 126, 127, 135;  
 Elena, 129, 130;  
 George, 45;  
 Jovan, despot (son of Angelina,  
 brother of Djuradj-Maxim),  
 130, 135;  
 Mara, 126, 127, 132, 134, 138;  
 (as monk: Maxim), 135, 135;  
 Stephen, 198  
 Brskovo, 173

- Bucharest, 104, 105, 107, 108, 109, 110,  
 111, 112  
 Bulgaria, 4, 7, 14, 15, 33, 92, 96, 98,  
 108, 109, 111  
 Bulgarian, 132, 139;  
 kingdom, 117;  
 political and cultural experience,  
 118;  
 rulers, 130  
 "Bulgarian Imitative" coins, 11  
 Bulgarians, the, 31, 33, 117  
 Busovača mine, 175  
 Byzantine:  
 administration, 200;  
 amulets, 50;  
 aristocracy, 36;  
 aristocratic costume, 59, 61;  
 army, 6, 8;  
 civilization, 167;  
 commonwealth, xii, 82, 117,  
 140, 167;  
 culture, 118;  
 East, 197, 201, 202;  
 elite, 92;  
 Empire, xii, xiii, 11, 31, 32, 33, 34,  
 35, 36, 37, 76, 92, 97, 112, 119,  
 134, 137, 165, 167, 172, 176, 202;  
 Hellenism, 23;  
 imperial clan, 93, 99;  
 imperial ethos, 119;  
 imperial family, 93;  
 imperial hierarchy, 199, 200;  
 imperial household, 98;  
 imperial ideology, 143;  
 imperial power, 117;  
 imperial tradition, 200;  
 "legacy," 118;  
 lexicon, 119;  
*oikoumene*, 93;  
 orbit, 92;  
 Orthodox polity, 118;  
 "patriotism," 35;  
 post-Byzantine, 69, 70, 118;  
 readers, 26;  
 rhetorical tradition, 25;  
 society, 35, 36;  
 sphere, 118;  
 sphere of influence, 98;  
 spiritual and political tradition, 139;  
 state, 32, 34, 35, 83;  
 "tradition," 118;  
 world, xiii, 34, 36, 37, 59, 61, 91, 92,  
 97, 99, 108  
 Byzantines, the, xiii, 8, 12, 13, 33,  
 35, 37  
 Byzantium, xi, xii, xiii, 4, 9, 13-14, 16,  
 23, 27, 28, 33, 34, 36, 60, 96, 97,  
 118, 138, 139, 200  
 caesar, 3  
 Campania, 122  
 Cantacuzino family, 123, 128  
 Cătălina, 129  
 center, xi, xii, 165  
 Cetina River, the, 175  
 Chalkidike, 42, 45, 46, 104  
 Chariton (monk), 112  
 Chariton (protos), 117, 139  
 Charles I Robert of Anjou, 175  
 Choniates, Michael, 34, 35  
 Choniates, Niketas, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11,  
 12, 13, 14, 15, 34, 36  
 Chora monastery, 63  
 Choumelitsa, 73  
 Christodoulos, monk, 74  
 Chrysoberges, Nikephoros, 13  
 Chrysoloras:  
 Demetrios, 44;  
 Manuel, 198  
 Cilicia, 33  
 Collingwood, Robin, 166  
 Constantia, 13  
 Constantin Brâncoveanu, 123  
 Constantine I the Great, 75, 83,  
 118, 200  
 Constantine IV, 69, 70-74  
 Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus,  
 169, 173  
 Constantine IX Monomachos, 75  
 Constantine Bodin, 171



- Constantine (painter), 75  
 Constantinople, xi, xii–xiii, 3, 4, 5, 9,  
   10, 11, 12–13, 14, 15, 23, 26, 27,  
   31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 41,  
   42, 43–45, 50, 52, 61, 63, 69, 81,  
   82, 83, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 98,  
   117, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 165,  
   172, 198, 200, 201;  
   Great Church of, 135, 136, 137;  
   Serbian Church in, 133, 134  
 Cornelius Dolabella, 167  
 Craiovescu (family), 122, 123, 133  
 Crnojević, John, 129  
 Cross of Constantine, 50  
 Crusaders, 23, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37,  
   91, 93, 96, 98  
 Crusades, 27, 32, 198  
 Cumans, the (Cuman), 3, 8, 9, 13  
 Curta, Florin, xiii  
 Cvijić, Jovan, 170  
 Cyprus, 33, 60  
 Cyril (Bossotà), 111  
  
 Dalmatia, 3, 4, 15, 122, 167, 168, 170,  
   172, 175, 201  
 Danube, 3, 8, 13, 14, 33, 96, 117,  
   118, 139  
 Darby, C. H., 166  
 Deblitzenoi, the, 43  
 Dekadyos. *See* Justin Dekadyos  
 Delbino, 75  
 Demetrios (painter), 75  
 Demetrios (Uroš I's cousin), 95, 96  
 Desoje, 174  
*despot*, 42, 43, 45, 50, 53, 105, 126,  
   130, 134, 178, 187, 190  
 Dibrobounion, 75  
 Diokleia, 93, 170, 171  
 Dionysiou monastery, 50, 123, 124,  
   126, 138  
 Dipalitsa/Molybdoskepastos, 70  
 Dobromir Chrysos, 7, 12, 13, 15, 16, 37  
 Docheiarou monastery, 43  
 Dolna Kamenica, 63;  
   Holy Virgin church in, 63  
 Domentijan, 94  
  
 Donji Kraji, 171, 175  
 Doubiane, 75  
 Douskon Mt. (Merope), 69  
 Drina River, the, 170, 174, 175  
 Drinjača River, the, 170  
 Dropulli, 75  
 Dubočica, 187–88, 189, 190, 192, 193  
 Dubrovnik, 167, 173, 175  
 Duklja, 4, 15  
 Dyonisius (monk), 111  
 Dyrrachion, 5, 6, 15  
  
 Eastern Empire, 27  
 Ecumenical Patriarch, 119, 135  
 Eden, 85  
 Enrico Dandolo, 93  
 Epirotic, 60;  
   aristocracy, 60  
 Epirus, 59–63, 69, 74, 92, 94  
 Eros, 26, 27  
 Erotokastron, 26  
 “ethnarch,” 136  
 Eudokia (Alexios III Angelos's  
   daughter), 9, 14, 15, 93, 94  
 Eudokia of Kiev, 130, 131  
 Europe, 122;  
   pre–World War II, xi;  
   southeastern. *See* Southeastern  
   Europe;  
   western, 9, 61, 186  
 Europeization, xiii  
 Eustathios of Thessalonica, 32, 83  
 Evgenianos, Niketas, 26  
  
 Fine, John, xiii  
 First Bulgarian Empire, 5  
 Florentine, 63  
 Fourth Crusade, xii, 15, 31, 33, 34  
 Fowden, Garth, xii  
 Frankish, 23  
 Franks, the, 27  
 French, 61  
 Frenchmen, 23  
  
 Gabriel (protos), 122, 123  
 Galicia, 13

- Gallipoli Peninsula, 13  
 Ganos Mt., 13  
 Gardiki, 73  
 Geary, Patrick, xiii  
 Gennadios Scholarios, 119  
 George of Larissa, 110  
 Georgians, the, 117;  
   Georgian rulers, 130  
 Georgios (painter), 75  
 German: crusaders, 8  
 Gidos, Alexios, 8  
 Giovanni Asan Zaccaria, 198  
 Gjergj Arianiti Comnen, 133  
 Gjirokastra, 73  
 Glasinac, 170  
 Glykas, Michael, 24  
 Golden Horde. *See* Mongolian Golden  
   Horde  
 Golgotha, 87  
 Gorantzi, 75  
 Gornji Vakuf, 170  
 Goths, the, 76  
 Gradeša, 171  
 Grammos, 75  
 Great Lavra. *See* Lavra of St.  
   Athanasius  
 Grebeniti, 74  
 Greece, 34, 37, 63, 198, 199, 201  
 Greek, 23, 25, 103, 104, 106, 107, 118,  
   122, 198;  
   –Albanian border, 69, 74;  
   antiquity, 199;  
   civilization, 167;  
   literary history, 23;  
   medieval romances, 24, 25;  
   late-antique novel, 24  
 Greeks, the, 8, 32;  
   the empress of, 14  
 Gregoras, Nikephoros, 31, 108, 110  
 Gregoriou monastery, 133  
 Guelke, L., 166  
  
 Haimos Mts., the (Stara Planina), 4, 5,  
   6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 15  
 Hellas, 13;  
   Hellada, 122, 198  
  
 Hellenistic, 23, 24  
 Hellespont, 122  
 Heraclius, 83  
 Herodotus, 35  
 Herzegovina, 167, 170  
 Hesychast(s), 105  
 Hierissos, 103, 104, 105  
 Hilandar, 111, 126–27, 128–29, 130,  
   131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 137,  
   138, 139  
 Holy Cross, 81–82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87  
 Holy Mountain. *See* Athos  
 Homer, 26, 200  
 Homeric, 25  
 Hrvoje Vukčić, 175  
 Hum, 175  
 Humor, 132  
 Hungarians, the, 4, 5, 10, 14, 15  
 Hungary, 3, 8, 10, 11, 14, 96, 132, 167,  
   175, 176;  
   Hungarian expansionism, 9;  
   Hungarian princess, 95  
 Hvojnica/Fojnica mine, 173  
  
 iconoclasm, 109  
 Ignatius Diakonos, 104  
 Illyricum, 73, 122  
 Imre (Hungarian King), 14  
 Ioanikios Kekratimenos, 112  
 Ioannes (painter), 75  
 Irene Porenè, 103, 107, 108, 109,  
   110, 112  
 Isaac II Angelos, 4, 5–6, 7–11, 12,  
   14, 15  
 Ishaković, Isa-beg, 186, 187, 188, 189  
 Islamic Law, 138  
 Israel, 86  
 Istanbul, xi, 135  
 Istrios (Danube), 10  
 Italian, 61, 63, 199, 201;  
   humanists, 198  
 Italy, 199, 200  
 Ivanko, 12, 15, 16, 37  
 Ivan-planina Mt., 170  
 Ivan Šišman, 118  
 Iviron monastery, 44, 111



- Jacob (metropolitan of Hierissos), 103, 104–5  
 Jakšić, the, 132;  
   Dmitry, 129;  
   Jelena, 135  
 Jeleč, 186  
 Jerusalem, 83, 86, 122, 128  
 Jireček, Constantine, 92  
 John II Komnenos, 3, 33  
 John III Batatzes, 92, 95  
 John VII Palaiologos, 41, 42, 43, 44  
 John VIII Palaiologos, 45  
 John of Damascus, 83  
 John Uglješa, 105  
 Joseph of Crete, 108, 110, 112  
 Justin Dekadyos, 123, 124  
 Justinian I, 73, 74, 75  
  
 Kaballarioi, the, 44  
 Kabasila, 74  
 Kabasilas, Alexios, 45, 74  
 Kalojan (Ioanitsa), 11, 13–14, 15  
 Kamytses:  
   Basil, 76;  
   Manuel, *protostrator*, 12, 13, 15, 16, 37  
 Kamytsiane, 76  
 Kantakouzenos, Thomas, 45  
 Kapesovo, 74  
 Karyai, 105  
 Kassandra, 45  
 Kastoria, 60, 65n13, 65n14, 65n16, 66n17, 66n19  
 Kinnamos, John, 170  
 Kladanj, 170  
 Kledonia, 73  
 Kneajna, 133  
 Kokkini ekklesia (Vella church), 60, 61;  
   Anna, sister-in-law of the donor of, 60;  
   Maria, wife of the donor of, 60;  
   Tsimiskes, Ioannis, the brother of the donor, 61;  
   Tsimiskes, Theodoros, the donor, 61  
 Komnenian:  
   dynasty, 33, 75;  
   family, 9;  
   hierarchy, 83;  
   period, 82, 83  
 Komnenoi, the, 9, 200  
 Komnenos, Isaac, *sebastokrator*, 12  
 Konitsa, 69, 72, 73, 74  
 Konjuh Mt., 170  
 Kosmaj Mt., 171  
 Kosovo, 4, 185  
 Kotor, 169, 173  
 Kotromanić dynasty, 168  
 Koutloumousiou monastery, 117, 119–20, 121, 124, 127, 128, 130, 138, 139  
 Kozane, 73  
 Krajina (“Kraji”), 170  
 Kratovo monastery, 130  
 Kreševo mine, 173  
 Krušedol monastery, 129, 130  
 Kruševac, 187–88, 189, 190, 192, 193  
 “Kugeas Notizbuch,” 44, 52  
 Kulin, 171, 172  
 Kuripešić, V., 175  
 Kypsella, 6, 7, 10  
  
 Larissa, 110  
 Laskaris, the, 45  
 Latin, 4, 27, 32, 36, 44, 96, 172, 197, 198  
 Lavra of St. Athanasius, 110, 11, 112  
 Lazar (Serbian prince), 118  
 Leontares, Demetrios, 42, 44, 45, 53  
 Lesnovo monastery, 130  
 Liaskobetsi (Leptokarya), 73  
 Lim River, the, 175  
 Linotopi, 75  
 Liountze, 75;  
   Stegopole of, 75  
 Ljubinja River, the, 173  
 Loma, Aleksandar, 173  
 Loupsiko (Lykorache), 74  
 Lovitzos (Loveč), 5  
 Lugdunia, 122  
 Luis I the Great, 175

- Luka, 171  
 Lyon, 92, 95;  
   Church Union of, 92, 95  
  
 Macedonia, 3, 4, 11, 13, 15, 16, 43, 44, 45, 96, 105, 125  
 Magdalino, Paul, xi  
 Makremvolites, Evdokios, 26  
 Makres, Makarios, 43, 45  
 Malachias (monk), 111  
 Manasses, Konstantinos, 24  
 Manasses (monk and hegoumen), 125  
 Mankaphas, Theodore, 37  
 Manuel I Komnenos, 3, 4, 5, 16, 24, 32, 33, 75, 83, 171  
 Manuel II Palaiologos, 41, 42, 43  
 Mareş, Alexandru, 103  
 Margaret (of Hungary, the daughter of Béla III), 5, 14  
 Maria-Oltea, 130, 131  
 Maria-Voichița, 131  
 Maskolouri, 73  
 Matei Basarab, 123, 128  
 Matija (Stephen) Ninoslav, 168, 171, 174  
 Mavromatis, Leonidas, 97  
 Mavro Orbini, 171  
 Maxim Trivoulis the Greek (monk), 124  
 Mediterranean:  
   civilization, 167;  
   Eastern, xii, 91, 99, 171  
 Mehmed II the Conqueror, 186, 187, 193  
 Menorah, 86  
 Mesene, 13  
 Mesogephyra, 72  
 Mesopotamon, 75  
 Messalians, 106, 107, 108, 109, 112;  
   Messalianism, 110  
 Methodius (monk), 111  
 Metohija, 4  
 Metrophan, 112  
 Michael VIII Palaiologos, 27, 75, 92, 95, 96  
 Michael (painter), 75  
  
 Mihnea “the Bad,” 122  
 Mileševa monastery, 130  
 Miljacka River, the, 174  
 Milutin, 86, 93, 95, 96, 97  
*mimesis*, 23  
 Mircea the Older, 120, 124  
 Mircea (the Younger), 126  
 Mistra, 43, 63;  
   Pantanassa in, 63  
 Mitchell, W. J. T., 87  
 Moesia, 122  
 Moldavia, 113, 119, 121, 129, 130, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 139, 140  
 Moldavian, 117, 118, 119, 130, 132, 134, 135, 137, 139;  
   Church, 135;  
   dynasty of Petru Rareș, 129;  
   medieval state, 118;  
   principality, 130, 137  
 Monemvasia, 108  
 Mongolian Golden Horde, 96  
 Monodendri, 60, 76;  
   Agia Paraskevi of, 60  
 Montenegrin, 129  
 Morava River, the, 9, 10, 11, 33  
 Morea, 126  
 Moses, 86  
 Moses the Zograf, 111  
 Mosynopolis, 12  
 Muculet, Jules, 166  
 Murad II, 43  
 Mysia, 7  
 Mysians, 5  
  
 Naples, 175, 198;  
   Aragon, 198  
 Năsturel, Petre Ș., 125  
 Neagoe Basarab, 120, 121–24, 126, 127–29  
 Nemerčka (mountain range), 69  
 Neretva River, the, 170, 174  
 New Rome, 27, 96;  
   Second Rome, 165  
 Nicaea, 31, 92, 94, 95;  
   Empire of, 31



- Nicandros, 112  
 Nicolae Alexandru, 117  
 Nikodemus the Serb, 118  
 Nikolaos (painter), 74, 75  
 Niphon (bishop), 104, 105  
 Niphon (priest), 111  
 Niš, 4, 10, 11, 14  
 Norman: invasion, 5, 9  
 Normans, 6
- Obolensky, Dimitri, xii  
 Ohrid, 94;  
     Archbishopric of, 94  
 Old Rome, xi  
 Olovo mine, 175  
 Onouphrios (painter), 74  
 Oriental, 23  
 Ostružnica mine, 175  
 Otranto, 199  
 Ottoman, Ottomans, Ottoman Empire,  
     23, 31, 41–43, 43–44, 45, 46, 50,  
     52, 53, 76, 97, 98, 112, 113, 117,  
     119, 122, 124, 126, 127, 130, 131,  
     132, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139,  
     140, 171, 176, 178, 185, 186–87,  
     189, 190, 191, 193, 197–99;  
     conquest, 117, 139, 176
- Pachymeres, Georgios, 24  
 Palaiologan, 112;  
     aristocracy, 41;  
     society, 41  
 Palaiologoi, the, 24, 27, 43, 45  
 Palaiologos:  
     Andronikos, *despot* (son of Manuel  
     II Palaiologos), 41–42, 43, 44, 45,  
     46, 50, 53;  
     Maria Asanina, 131, 132;  
     Theodore, *despot* (son of Manuel II  
     Palaiologos), 43;  
     Thomas, *despot* of Morea, 126, 198  
 Palamites, 109  
 Panaitescu, P. P., 103, 104  
 πανευγενέστατος, 61  
 Pantokrator monastery, 43, 45
- Paphlagonia, 122  
 Paradounavon, 3, 8, 15  
 Parga, 75  
 Pârvu of Băjesti, 129  
 Patriarchate (of Constantinople), 35, 98,  
     135, 136  
 Patriarch Efthimy of Târnovo, 118  
 Patriarch Maxim, 125  
 Patriarch (of Constantinople) Isidore  
     Buchiras, 108, 110  
 Patriarch (of Constantinople) Kallistos,  
     107, 109, 111  
 Patriarch (of Constantinople) Manuel I  
     Sarantenos, 94  
 Patriarch (of Constantinople) Philotheus  
     Kokkinos, 109  
 Patroklos, 7  
 Pavković, Nikola, 170  
 Pechenegs, the, 31  
 Pek, 187  
 Pelagonia, 13  
 Peloponnesos, 13, 33, 37, 43  
 Pentecostarion, 104  
 periphery, xi, xii, 4, 165  
 Persians, the, 31  
 Peter I (Bulgarian tsar), 5  
 Peter and Paul, 76  
 Petraliphas (family), 37  
 Petrarch, 199  
 Petru Rareș, 129, 130, 134, 135, 139  
 Philippiada, 60;  
     Pantanassa of, 60  
 Philippopolis, 8–9, 11, 12  
 Plakote (Thesprotia), 76  
 Planudes, Maximos, 24, 27  
 Plesati, 73  
 Pliva, 171  
 Podrinje, 170  
 Pogoni, 61  
 Pogoniane, 69  
 political verse, 24  
 Politsiane, 74;  
     Mprodetsi of, 74  
 Polog, 10  
 Pontus, 33

- Pope Celestine III, 10  
 Pope Gregory IX, 166  
 Pope Honorius III, 93, 94  
 Pope Innocent III, 13, 15, 93, 94  
 Porte, the, 126, 129, 132, 135, 136  
 Poulcheria (sister of Roman III  
     Argyros), 74  
 Preslav, 5, 7  
 Priest of Diokleia, 170  
 Prijezda, 171  
 Prilep, 13  
 Prizren, 10  
 Probota monastery, 131  
 Prodromos, Theodore, 26  
 Progge, 73  
 Prosakos, 12  
 protostrator, 12  
 provincial "patriotism," 35  
 Putna monastery, 132
- Rabenia, 75  
 Radoslav, 94  
 Radu of Afumați (son of Radu the  
     Great), 127, 138, 139  
 Radu Paisie (son of Radu the Great),  
     127  
 Radu the Great, 122, 123, 124, 125–26,  
     127, 128, 129, 133, 134, 138  
 Radu the Handsome, 133  
 Ragiou, 75  
 Ras, 186  
 Raška, 171  
 Reggio Calabria, 200  
 regional separatism, 4  
 Renaissance, 23, 201  
 Resava, 103;  
     style orthography, 103  
 Rhadenos, the, 45, 53;  
     John, 45;  
     Stephanos Doukas, 45  
 Rhodope Mts., the, 11, 12, 13, 16  
 Rhomaioi, 83, 105  
 Rigo, Antonio, 105, 106, 107, 109, 111  
 Rogkobou monastery, 74  
 Roman:  
     antiquity, 199;  
     Catholic, 198, 201;  
     civilization, 167;  
     Empire, xiii, 167, 200;  
     roads, 168;  
     times, 72;  
     tradition, 200;  
     world, xiii  
 Roman III Argyros, 74  
 Romanesque, 23  
 Romanian, 103, 113, 123, 128, 135,  
     137, 138;  
     Library of Academy, 103  
 Romanija Mt., 170  
 Romans, 5, 7  
 Rome, 13, 15, 43, 83, 92, 96, 176, 198,  
     199;  
     Augustinian, 200  
 Rum: Sultan of, 33  
 Russians, the, 13, 31, 117
- Salona, 168  
 Sarajevo, 169, 170, 174  
 Sava River, the, 10, 171, 175  
 Saxon, 173  
 Scottish Highlands, 168  
 "Scythian desert," 35  
 sebastokrator, 8, 12, 14, 92  
 "Second Bulgarian Empire," 4, 37  
 Selim I, 138  
 Senacherim, 37  
 Șerban Cantacuzino, 123  
 Serbia, 3, 4, 5, 9–11, 14–15, 33, 45, 81,  
     91–92, 93, 97–99, 111, 130, 167,  
     168, 169, 170, 171, 173, 187,  
     193;  
     Nemanide, 81, 82  
 Serbian:  
     autocephalous (autonomous) church,  
     87, 93, 94;  
     despotate, 117;  
     despots, 176;  
     dynasty, 126;  
     empire, 97, 185, 193;  
     historiography, 91;



- lands, 169, 185, 190;  
 Lavra. *See* Hilandar;  
 medieval state, 94;  
 Orthodoxy, 129, 134;  
 political and cultural experience,  
   118;  
 polity, 97;  
 royal lineage, 93;  
 rulers, 92, 130;  
 ruling family, 93, 98;  
 scholarship, 98;  
 state, 139, 185;  
 throne, 175;  
 world, 134
- Serbs, the, 8, 9, 10, 117, 129
- Serrai, 12
- Servitium, 168
- Seth, 86
- Sgouros, Leon, 37
- Shepard, Jonathan, xii
- Sibilav, 171, 172;  
   Stephen, father of, 172
- Sicily, 72, 200
- Simonis, 93, 96
- Sinai, 122
- Sion, 122
- Sirmium, 3, 4, 10, 14, 168
- Sjenica, 186
- Skanderbeg, 132
- Skleros:  
   Bardas, 74;  
   Basil, 74;  
   Roman, 74
- Skopje, 4, 9, 10, 186
- Slavic, 103, 104, 106, 107, 108, 111,  
   112, 167, 172, 198;  
   south, 118, 119, 122, 133, 139;  
   southern Slavic lands, 128;  
   southern Slavic monasticism, 139;  
   southern Slavic Orthodox states, 117;  
   southern Slavic realms, 129;  
   southern Slav rulers, 132;  
   southern Slav territories, 129
- Slavs, the, 31
- Smederevo, 187, 189;
- sanjak of, 189
- Smolena, 13, 15, 16
- Sofia, 4, 5, 9, 11;  
   Sardica, 11
- Soli, 175
- Solomon, 86
- Sopoćani monastery, 130
- Southeastern Europe, xii–xiv, 33,  
   91–92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 98, 99,  
   108, 117, 167, 186
- Split, 167, 168, 173, 175
- Spyridonakes, John, 15, 16, 37
- St. Demetrios, 5, 7, 50
- St. Donatos, 75
- Ştefan Lăcustă, 133, 134
- Ştefan the Great (son of Bogdan II),  
   130, 131–32, 133–34, 135,  
   136, 139;  
   Alexandru, son of, 130, 131;  
   Maria, wife of, 130, 131, 133;  
   Maria-Despina, mother of, 133;  
   Olena, daughter of, 130, 131
- Ştefan the Younger, 129, 134
- Stephen III, Hungarian king, 3
- Stephen Dragutin, 175
- Stephen Dušan, 105, 137
- Stephen Nemanja (Nemanya) (St.  
   Simeon), 3, 4, 9, 10, 14, 81, 82,  
   83, 92, 93, 171
- Stephen Nemanjić (The First-Crowned),  
   9, 14, 15, 33, 82, 86, 92, 93, 94
- Stephenson, Paul, xiii
- Stephen Tomaš, 176
- Stephen Uroš II Milutin. *See* Milutin
- St. George Decapolite, 104
- St. Gregory of Sinai, 109
- St. Gregory Palamas, 108, 109
- Stjepan (Stephen) II Kotromanić, 175
- St. Nestor, 50
- St. Nikolaos monastery, 73
- St. Niphon, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126,  
   128
- Stoumbion, 11
- St. Panteleimon monastery, 44, 133, 134
- St. Paraskevi monastery, 61

- St. Paul monastery on Athos, 128, 130,  
   133, 134
- Strumitsa, 12
- Strymon Valley, 11, 13
- St. Sava (Nemanjić), 82, 83, 93, 94, 130
- Sts. Constantine and Helen monastery,  
   73
- Sts. Joachim and Anna, 86
- St. Sophia (in Thessalonica), 46, 50
- St. Theodosius of Tărnovo, 107, 108,  
   109, 111, 112
- Studenica, 81, 82, 84–85, 86–87
- Süleyman the Magnificent, 138, 186
- Susjed, 170
- Symeon, Metropolitan of Thessalonica,  
   42
- Synodicon (of Orthodoxy), 103, 104,  
   105, 106, 107–8, 109, 110, 111,  
   112, 113
- Tabernacle, 86
- Tarchaneiotai, the, 42, 45, 53
- Tarchaneiotas, Iakovos, 42, 45
- Tărnovo, 12, 13, 108, 109, 111
- Temple Mount, 86
- Tetovo, 186, 187, 189
- Theodora (Alexios III Angelos's  
   granddaughter), 12
- Theodore I Laskaris, 94
- Theodore II Laskaris, 95
- Theodore Angelos, 94
- Theodore-Peter (Vlach–Bulgarian  
   leader), 5, 6–7, 8, 12, 33;  
   coronation of, 7
- Theodore Stoudite, 83
- Theodorete, 112
- Theodosius I, 75, 200
- Theodosius (bishop), 105
- Theophilus (monk), 112
- Theotokos Molybdoskepastos  
   (Dormition of the Virgin), 69, 70,  
   72, 73
- Therianos, Michael Voevod, 61, 63;  
   Theodora, the wife of, 61, 63
- Therianos family, 63
- Thessalonike (Thessalonica), 5, 32, 41–45,  
   46, 50, 50–53, 96, 108, 112, 165
- Thessaly, 13, 15, 16, 37, 110
- Third Crusade, 8
- Thrace, 3, 4, 5, 8, 11, 13, 15, 16;  
   Thracia, 122;  
   Thracian peasants, 36;  
   Thracian Plain, 11
- Tismana monastery, 118
- Toplica, 187–88, 189, 190, 193
- Trebizond: Empire of, 33
- Trent, 201
- Triodion, 104
- Tsamantas, 76
- Tsepelovo, 74
- Tsepou, monastery of, 73
- Tsimiskes, Theodoros. *See* Kokkini  
   ekklisia, Tsimiskes, Theodoros,  
   the donor
- Tsimiskes, Ioannis. *See* Kokkini  
   ekklisia, Tsimiskes, Ioannis, the  
   brother of the donor
- Tvrčko I, 175;  
   Vuk (Stephen) brother of, 175
- Tzamlakones, the, 44
- Tzouroulos, 13
- Ungrovlahia, 120
- Union of the Churches, 43
- Uroš I, 94–96
- Uskoplje, 171, 174, 175
- Usora, 170, 171, 175
- Vardar, 4, 10
- Varna, 5, 11, 13
- Vatatzes, Basil, 8
- Vatican library, 106
- Vatopedi monastery, 42, 45, 46, 50, 53,  
   124, 125–26, 133, 134, 138
- Venetian, Venetians, 23, 36, 41, 42, 43,  
   44, 45, 46, 50, 52, 95, 198
- Venice, 45, 46, 93, 173
- Vidal de la Blanche, P., 168
- Vidin, 8, 191, 192
- Višegrad, 170



- Visoko, 169, 170, 171, 173;  
Biskupići near, 171  
Vlach (Vlach-Bulgarian), 4, 5, 7, 8–9,  
10–13, 15, 16;  
insurrection, 4, 7  
Vladislav-Vlaicu, 117, 120, 124  
Vlad the Drowned (son of Vlad the  
Younger), 127  
Vlad the Monk, 124, 125, 126, 127–28,  
129, 134, 137, 138  
Vlad the Younger (son of Vlad the  
Monk), 122, 123, 127  
Vlad Vintilă (purported son of Radu the  
Great), 125, 127  
Vodița monastery, 118  
Volynia, 13  
Voulgareli, 60  
Vranduk gorge, 170  
Vranica Mt., 170  
Vrbas River, the, 168, 170, 171, 174  
Vrhbosna, 169, 173, 174  
Vrutci, 167  
Vukan, 14, 15, 93, 94;  
Gospel of, 174  
Wales, 168  
Wallachia, 113, 119, 120, 121–23, 124,  
125, 127, 128, 129, 135, 136, 137,  
138, 139, 140  
Wallachian, 117, 118, 119, 124, 125,  
126, 128, 129, 134, 135, 137,  
138–39;  
dynasty, 118, 138;  
elite, 129;  
medieval state, 118;  
principality, 130, 137  
Xantheia, 12  
Yolanda of Monferrat, 27  
Ypseles Petras. *See* Tsepou  
Yugoslavia, 63  
Zachariadou, Elisabeth, 138  
Zadar, 167, 173  
Zagori, 60, 73, 75  
Ždrelo, 187  
Zenica, 171, 174  
Žepče, 170  
Zerma (Plagia), 73  
Zeta. *See* Duklja  
Zoe, the empress, 74  
Zographou monastery, 119, 120, 130,  
131, 132, 133, 135  
Zsigmund, 175  
župan (zhupan), 3, 92, 96  
Zvečan, 186  
Zvijezda Mt., 170

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